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TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

THE TENDER RECOLLECTIONS

OF

IRENE MACGILLICUDDY.

[MAGA. DEC. 1877, AND JAN. 1878.]

I.

THERE is something very appalling to one so young and inexperienced as myself in the effort of sitting down for the first time in my life to address the public. Apart from the horrid doubt which haunts me, and which seems to paralyse my pen, that perhaps after all my trouble I shall not be able to find any publisher with a sufficient appreciation of my talent to accept my manuscript, there is the conviction that the little story I am about to tell will produce a very considerable sensation upon one, if not upon both sides of the Atlantic; possibly it

may not be altogether favourable to myself. I shall be called unpatriotic, unladylike, calumnious, perhaps even indelicate, for describing a few episodes of my somewhat rapid career, not with any view of forcing my own insignificant personality upon the public, but because it is impossible for me otherwise to illustrate the manners and customs of the society in which I was brought up. Ever since I was transplanted from the splendid brown stone mansion on Fifth Avenue in New York, where I passed the giddy seasons of my girlhood, to the modest luxury of the villa in Richmond, from which I am now writing, I have felt possessed by an absorbing desire to "show up," so to speak, the life led by the world of fashion in the American metropolis, from a purely philanthropic point of view. It has seemed to me that the only chance of doing it any good was to expose it, not unkindly, but with the faithfulness and affection of a friend who tells another his faults. I think it will be new to my English readers, who may rely upon its accuracy; but they need not on that account flatter themselves that the present condition of London society is in any respect superior to that of New York. I tell you, mothers of London, that in your powers of setting matrimonial snares, and of successfully disposing of your marriageable wares, you are more than a match for the "smartest" of your American sisters, who leave their daughters to take care of themselves; and

you young married women of high degree, do not imagine that the frisky matrons of New York can teach you anything you did not know before. Indeed I think it is fortunate for you that the social *convenances* of London deny you the freedom which they enjoy. It is not to either of these two classes that I have anything very new to reveal, though they may pick up a few hints, or draw comparisons invidious or otherwise. It is you, my dear girls, who are heedlessly flirting and fluttering on the brink of the matrimonial abyss, whose good I have at heart.

I have tried both Worlds, Old and New; and so far as faults and follies go, I don't think there is much to choose between them. My present business is with the faults and follies of my own country, with which I feel more especially competent to deal, and which I am most desirous to see corrected and reformed. Having violently reacted from them myself, it is only natural that I should be consumed by the fervour of proselytism, and should, regardless of consequences, exhibit myself as a warning, if need be, to those I wish to serve. When I first appeared upon the social horizon, I may say without vanity that I was the kind of girl who in London would have been called a "stunner," a "screamer," and who in New York is sometimes described as a "bouncer."

My father was the son of a Scotch gardener of

the name of Macgillicuddy, who had emigrated to New York, engaged in the grocery business, and by superior shrewdness and Scotch caution had amassed a considerable fortune, which enabled him to give his son a good education—in other words, to make a gentleman of him. Unusually successful in early life in railway and stock speculations, my father soon became the possessor of a handsome mansion on Fifth Avenue, and a financial man of some prominence. Far too respectable himself to become a politician, he nevertheless enjoyed great influence with his party; and there was an air of substantial dignity about him, which, taken in connection with the invariable success that attended his business operations, secured him a commanding position in society. Originally a Presbyterian, he had become attached to an Episcopalian church with ritualistic tendencies, a theological step almost rendered necessary by his fashionable standing; and his box at the opera, which cost him £3000, and expensive pew in St Grace's, for which he paid £2000, though apparently useless luxuries—for he never practised what he professed in the one, and rarely went himself to the other, as he did not know the difference between the wedding march in 'Lohengrin' and "Tommy make room for your Uncle"—were, nevertheless, a recognition of the claims of God and of society with which he could not afford to dispense. He had one brother who had never

risen above the level of a stone-mason ; and to him, therefore, it is not necessary here further to allude. My mother had been quite a "belle" and an heir-ess in her time. Her father had made his fortune in "dry goods," and my maternal uncles were both men enjoying great social consideration on account of their wealth. One was in the hardware business, and the other had struck oil. My mother was a remarkably clever and well-educated woman. She had spent several of the early years of her life in Europe, where she had acquired a taste for art, which my father also affected, without, however, knowing anything about it ; and the result was, as their combined taste was somewhat florid, that our house looked like a badly-arranged museum. She was, moreover, an accomplished musician, with a magnificent contralto voice ; indeed, she was as much superior to the average amateur performer as her cook was to ordinary culinary artists : hence it happened that our dinners and our music were both celebrated. In addition to all this, she had an unrivalled knack of capturing distinguished foreigners, and especially British aristocrats, immediately on their arrival in New York. It is needless to say that we had a cottage at Newport, where we spent three summer months in a perpetual whirl of gaiety ; from all which it must be manifest that nothing was left undone to secure that social position which became at last an object of envy and admiration to

every well-constituted New York mind. It would be a mistake to suppose that this eminence was attained without infinite trouble and contrivance. I was too young to take an active share in my mother's early social struggles; but even to the end, she never succeeded in thoroughly breaking down an indefinable sort of barrier, behind which a certain ultra-exclusive set chose to intrench themselves. I used to think the presumption and conceit of these people quite intolerable. The idea, in a democratic country like ours, of a select few priding themselves on their ancestry and gentility and hereditary refinement, and all the rest of it, and thinking us not good enough to be admitted into their circle, was quite preposterous. There were the Persimmons, for instance, who assumed the arms of the noble family of Persimmons in England, and claimed relationship with them, and had actually family portraits of knights in wigs and ladies in stomachers, and all that sort of thing (young Dick Persimmon was a clerk in a wholesale tobacco store); and there were the Poppinjays, and the Barebones family, that had a fancy portrait of their great historical ancestor, Praise God Barebones, who came over in the Mayflower, and whose descendant, as is well known, signed the Declaration of Independence. They turned up their noses at us because grandpapa had originally been a gardener—as if anybody could have told what the

original old Barebones had been. Then in close alliance with these there was the old Knickerbocker set, the Van Twillers, descended from the original Wouter van Twiller, and the Van Didntoffers, of whom more anon, and several others, who, for some mysterious reason, thought themselves better than we were. Mamma's principle was to feel thoroughly democratic towards everybody in a democratic country who thought that they were above her, and to feel thoroughly aristocratic towards all those whom she thought beneath her, or whom it was inconvenient to treat as equals; and I suppose that was the principle which the others applied to her. Every now and then our efforts would be crowned with a new triumph, especially after I became a recognised belle, and we had formed closer intimacies with this set, and then the airs mamma used to give herself for some time afterwards were quite alarming. Of course, as we progressed we dropped a good many of our earlier acquaintances.

As for myself, I never regularly "came out;" in fact, I may be said to have been more or less "out" all the time. From the days when, in short frocks, I used to help my mother to receive her guests, I was recognised as the principal personage of the family. My father yielded to me in everything, and my mother soon perceived that I was destined to become a most valuable element of social success.

First I had a French *bonne*, then the best masters that money could procure; and when I was sixteen I was taken to France and Italy for a year, to acquire a knowledge of art and to pick up the habits of polite society in Europe. I was very quick and industrious; and when I compare my proficiency at this age, in music, languages, and painting, with the accomplishments of English girls, I think I may say, without undue conceit, that I far surpassed them. It was with a fluttering heart that I viewed my native shores from the deck of a Cunard steamer, as, thus armed and equipped for the social fray, I returned to New York. It was no feeling of timidity, but a daring and confident longing, that caused this sensitive organ to palpitate so wildly; perhaps also there was a suspicion that before very long it might be beating for other reasons. Come what might, I was prepared to meet it. I knew I was beautiful, thanks to my mother, whose good looks I had inherited. I was an only child, and therefore a large heiress, accomplished, clever, and self-reliant. Nothing was more incomprehensible to me than the shy silence of the bread-and-butter misses whose acquaintance I made during my short stay in London. Even their brothers I was often obliged to help on in conversation—they never seemed to know what to say, or how to say it; while I never knew what it was to be at a loss.

My mother was a woman exceptionally well quali-

fied to launch a girl in the society of New York; she had made it a study, and I felt I was in good hands. Before I went to my first ball she gave a series of dinner-parties. To these she especially asked all the young married men who have it in their power to make or mar the *débutante* in her first season. It is they, not their wives, who are the leaders of fashion; and it is to them that the would-be belle must pay her court if she wishes to succeed. Of course the unmarried men are important; but they take their *queue* from the older hands, who, in spite of having wives, are still the most indefatigable ball-goers, the recognised leaders of the "German," and the established authorities on matters of fashionable etiquette. Where society has no regular hierarchy, as it has in England, its leaders are self-constituted or tacitly acknowledged. The men, as a rule, marry so young that they have not had time to become *blasés*; and the consequence is, that they flirt as actively with unmarried girls, and flutter about as flippantly, as if they were still single. In some cases they keep this up until their own daughters come out, overwhelming the girls of their choice with bouquets, *bonbonnières*, and trifling presents, taking them solitary drives, giving them dinners, boxes at the opera, and distinguishing them by such marks of delicate attention as are always grateful to the female mind. Occasionally these are pushed to such a point that they give rise to

unpleasant gossip, but I have never known any real harm come of them. The girls are always thoroughly well able to take care of themselves; and upon the occasions, which sometimes happen, of a man becoming so desperately in love as to forget his conjugal duties and propose an elopement, he invariably meets with a positive and decided refusal. In this respect they show a sagacity and sense of propriety which the aristocratic mothers of young families in London, who think nothing of running away with the husbands of their lady friends, would do well to imitate. Of course an exclusive devotion of this sort has a tendency to injure a girl, because it keeps off the young men while it lasts; but perhaps on the whole she gains a sort of *prestige* by it, which only renders her more attractive to them when it is over.

When the great occasion of my first ball arrived, the carriage could hardly hold all the bouquets that were sent. Unfortunately mamma was taken suddenly unwell the very day of the ball; but she did not wish me to be disappointed, as I had been taking so much trouble with my dress, and looking forward to it so eagerly: so I arranged with Harry Hardpan, who had stamped me with his approval, and indeed shown me a good deal of attention on the strength of having been fond of me in a fatherly way when I was a little girl, to send his wife for me—she was only two years older than I

was ; and he met us at the door with several of my friends to help to carry my bouquets. There were thirteen altogether, of which eight had been sent by married men and five by bachelors. I calculated that their united value was upwards of a hundred and twenty dollars, or about £25. All my bouquets had come with cards on them ; and as I read the senders' names, I felt that my success was assured. This inspired me with still greater confidence as I entered the ball-room. That night was a triumph—I was literally besieged ; but I was determined to act with caution, for fear of making the other girls jealous. I felt at once the importance of establishing myself in a feminine coterie—so much can be done by combination. I am convinced that there is no greater mistake for a girl than to be misled, by the admiration of the opposite sex, into losing her popularity with her own. Young men are intimidated and kept in their proper place by a strong phalanx of girls, if these hold together properly. It requires a youth of uncommon nerve boldly to face half-a-dozen girls all tittering together in a corner, who, he knows, will pick him to pieces the moment he leaves them. We New York girls used to keep our little heels on the necks of our beaux, and trample over them ruthlessly. In London the case is exactly reversed, and the poor girls are crushed by the aw-quite-too-awfully-aw kind of youth, to a degree which makes my blood boil. It

is partly because London girls don't understand how to combine and organise, so to speak, against the men, and partly because they have to compete against the young married women, that they are treated with such indifference. Now in my day, in New York, the young married women were nowhere, or, in the vernacular of that city, they "had no show;" but I hear that they are making a good deal of running of late years, and that the girls are beginning to complain seriously. Another reason why American girls have such a much better time than English girls is, that as they have so much liberty, they can offer more inducements to the young men to pay them attention. A young man will submit to be crushed and bullied and sat upon, if you make it all right at the end of the evening by asking him to take you a sleigh-ride next day, or to give you a dinner at Delmonico's, with only a young lady friend of your own age, and her husband, who admires you, to do proper. What fun we girls used to have, and what plans we used to concoct for robbing our beaux of their affections, of exchanging them when we got tired of them, or of drawing them on to the proposing point! In my first season I had seven proposals. I had several far better seasons than this later on; but mamma said I could not have expected to have done more the first winter, considering the girls I had to compete with, some of whom possessed

all my advantages, combined with far greater experience.

Here again I am struck with the difference between England and America. I don't suppose English girls get one proposal for ten that we get. I know one girl, now twenty-four, who has had 157. This I can vouch for, as she showed me the list; but some of the men must have been very slightly wounded, for one asked to be introduced to her not long since. He had been in California for four years, and had forgotten that when he last saw her he had proposed to her, and she had forgotten that she had refused him. He had, in the meantime, made a large fortune in Bonanzas, the absence of which was her objection to him at the time; and they are now engaged to be married. She says she does not see why she should put off getting married any longer, especially as the young married women are beginning to have such a good time.

On the whole, however, I used to think there was far more fun to be had at Newport than in New York. That is the place to contract intimacies both with the girls and the young men. The picnics and games, the perpetual drives with the temporary beau of your choice, the garden-parties, and constant contact with the same set, tend to establish your position. At the end of one season in New York, and another at Newport, you may be said to have learnt the whole game thoroughly, and can

judge for yourself whether you are *de la première force* or not. You now feel perfectly able to take care of yourself, and can allow yourself all sorts of liberties that you could not have ventured upon at first. You have even got so far as to call one or two young men by their Christian names; in talking of them among ourselves we never think of alluding to them except as Dick, or Tom, or Harry, and so forth.

My intimate friend, *confidante*, and rival was my cousin, Flora Temple. In spite of her grand name, she was not so well born as I was, or as her namesake on the turf—for her father was originally a tailor, who had made his fortune during the war by taking army contracts; and when he had risen to the social surface, he married my mother's sister, and then, rather fortunately for my cousin, died, for he was a very shoddy sort of person, and left her two millions of dollars. This, together with her own beauty and talent, and my mother's social influence, soon pushed her into the front rank. She was more than two years my senior, and had commenced her career by a tremendous affair with the celebrated Iky Bullstock, who for the last fifteen years has been devoting himself to ensnaring the affections of girls as soon as they come out. Since his marriage, his name has been connected with no fewer than ten. I was counting them up with Flora not long ago; but then, I think, in the cases of

several, it was mere idle gossip. Anyhow, it did not do Flora any harm, for Charlie van Didntoffer was simply wild about her. Charlie belonged to one of the oldest Knickerbocker families; he was very handsome, a banker of the highest standing, and had charming manners. I am sure many of my English readers must remember him in Paris and Rome. He was almost omnipotent at the fashionable Spuyten Duyvel Club, was prominent in all matters of sport, and was universally popular. To begin with a flirtation with Iky Bullstock, and go on to an engagement with Charlie van Didntoffer, was enough to turn any girl's head. In my own secret soul, though, we girls were much more reticent in these matters than English girls are; and, I can't say for certain, I don't believe Flora cared so much for Charlie as she pretended, and mentally reserved the right to throw him over if sufficient inducement should offer, but she enjoyed what you in England call the "swagger" of the thing. Whether Charlie suspected this or not, I don't know; but certain it is that at Newport, where we were all three thrown a good deal together, I began to perceive indications of a wavering in his affections in my direction. Now I am no base, ungenerous, or treacherous girl; but I don't think that it was in flesh and blood to help reciprocating just the least bit, more especially as Iky was still fluttering around: and on several occasions I did

not think Flora's conduct quite fair towards Charlie, and felt quite sorry for him, poor fellow ; and so by degrees it came about—I know I was to blame, but I really could not help it—before I knew where I was, Charlie had proposed to me. He said he felt sure Flora was only trifling with him, and if I would only accept him he would throw her over. I never consulted mamma much on these subjects, as I always felt she took such a mercenary view of them—she seemed to make no allowance for sentiment ; so I had to work it out for myself, and as I was barely eighteen, I was determined to do nothing rash. So I told Charlie that I could not disguise the fact that I cared for him more than for anybody else ; but at the same time as he was engaged to Flora, I could not countenance his jilting her on my account, but I thought we had better all wait as we were for a year. If at the end of that time Flora still cared for him, and he still cared for me, and I did not care for somebody else, then we could discuss the whole matter over again ; and in the meantime we could remain upon the nice intimate terms which this little confidence would produce. You see, I thought a year would surely bring about a change in the situation somehow, which would make it all easier. What does the stupid boy do but go straight to Flora and tell her he finds he does not care for her any longer ! Of course Flora was furious, and said I had behaved shamefully ; and

for some weeks we did not speak. The affair made quite a stir at the time; all Newport was talking about it, and it was one of the standard pieces of gossip in New York when everybody returned from their various watering-places and exchanged the several scandals which had occurred at them respectively. Although Charlie was very devoted to me, I felt rather uncomfortable, and refused to be definitely engaged to him. In spite of being so fond of gaiety, I was also a devourer of all kinds of literature and general information, and really studied as hard as my other avocations would permit. Now, although Charlie was most refined and gentlemanlike in his manners, he lacked what in Boston (pronounced not inappropriately Boreston) is called culture (pronounced culchaw). What between banking, driving his four-in-hand, and attending to Flora or me, he seemed to have no time to inform his mind. In this respect he was not inferior to Iky Bullstock, Harry Hardpan, or any of the others; but I wanted to marry a mind as well as a man, and I told him so. After that he used to come and read Dickens to me for an hour a-day. I told him when he had finished all Dickens's novels, I would put him through a course of "New England thought," and by that time I should be in a position to give a definite answer in regard to our marriage.

For the reason I am about to narrate, that time never arrived. We were in the middle of 'Bleak

House,' and I was thinking how in the world to make it up again with Flora, when Charlie came in panting one day with a most important piece of intelligence. Letters had just been received by his firm announcing that the Earl of Chowder, eldest son of the Duke of Gumbo, and Viscount Huckleberry were to arrive by the next steamer, enclosing letters of credit and requesting the Van Didntoffer Brothers to do all in their power to make their stay in New York agreeable to them. The agitation into which this intelligence threw mamma, at once revealed to me the vast ambitions of which that excellent woman was capable. Magnetically her noble aspirations seemed instantly conveyed to my own bosom; and though Charlie was reading about Lady Dedlock, a theme which at any other time would have absorbed my attention, "the beating of my own heart was the only sound I heard." Here was a splendid opportunity for setting matters right with Flora; besides, I needed her co-operation and advice. There was one for each of us; and provided we did not interfere with each other and go for the same one, as we had in the case of Charlie, there was no reason why, with the advantage of an early start, we should not have it all our own way. The fact is, we were both considerably put upon our mettle by the triumphant success which had just crowned the efforts of our two most intimate friends, —Ida Straddle, daughter of Billy Straddle, of the

well-known firm of Puff and Straddle, brokers—and Laura Berstup, whose father is a railway magnate, and well known amongst English shareholders for the talent with which he has made his fortune out of the dividends they fondly hoped to pocket. Ida, after a rapid campaign extending a little over a fortnight, had captured an impecunious Spanish grandee who valued his dukedom at half a million of dollars. Billy, who has always shown himself a most fond and indulgent father, had the cash down on the nail, and Ida became the Duchess of Virdemonio, to the great envy of us all, and has already sent those of us who wish to contract alliances with the Spanish aristocracy, invitations to visit her in her “Château en Espagne ;” and here I may remark, that whenever one of us makes a successful hit of this sort, she always does her utmost to help on her friends. Then Laura was engaged to be married to the Russian Prince Schamovitch : he was next door to being a *crétin* ; but as he was distantly connected with the Romanoffs, the splendour of the alliance reduced every other consideration to insignificance. Besides, as Laura said, they were going to live principally in Paris, where it was rather convenient than otherwise for a very pretty woman to have a fool for a husband. As the Prince is enormously rich, and Laura is not badly off, I have no doubt they will have a good time ; but you may imagine how all this was calculated to stimulate

our energies. Any girl with a well-balanced mind would rather be an English countess, or even viscountess, than a Spanish duchess or a Russian princess. We classify them somewhat as follows: First, the British aristocracy down to baron—we don't think much of baronets and knights; next, we like French and Russians, because that involves living a good deal in Paris; but titles below dukes and princes are too common to be really much prized, unless attached to a very old historic name or great wealth. Italians and Spanish come next, the former preferred on account of the climate and social advantages of Rome and Naples. Germans we don't so much care about; I think, perhaps, because there are too many Germans in the country already.

But all this is a digression; only I was obliged to enter a little into it in order to explain why the arrival of the Earl of Chowder and Lord Huckleberry was likely to produce so much sensation amongst us. So I posted off to Flora with the news. The fact is, that Flora was as tired of our estrangement as I was. So when I rushed into her room, and said, "My dear, I have come to tell you such a piece of news!" she said, quite cordially—

"You can't think, Irene, how I have been longing to see you lately. Why have you been keeping away so?"

As if she didn't know that it was no pleasure to me to come and be snubbed, and that my absence

had been due to her own crossness. However, I was not vindictive ; so I said, impetuously—

“ Oh, Flozie ! ” (this was my pet name when we were in our most loving moods,) “ who do you think are coming to New York ? and Charlie is to bring them to us the first day. Why, the Earl of Chowder and Viscount Huckleberry ! Isn’t it puffedly splendid ? ” Candour compels me to state that, in my excited moments, I am in the habit of describing most things as “ puffedly splendid.” We all do ; and, on the whole, I think it is better than the expression used by English girls under the same circumstances, of “ quite too awfully nice.”

“ Oh, lovely ! ” said Flora. “ But poor Charlie ; what are you going to do with him ? ” she asked, maliciously.

“ Oh, Charlie can stand it,” I replied. “ Don’t you remember, before he was engaged to you, he was engaged a whole year to Lizzie Puff, and something always happened to put off the marriage, till at last he told her that he was sorry to find that he did not care for her ; but that if, knowing this, she still wanted to marry him, he would make the necessary sacrifice ? I don’t think we need have any compassion for him.”

“ Darling,” said Flora, “ you are quite right. How stupid we were ever to quarrel about him ! but, my dear, we must take care not to make the same mistake again. How shall we manage ? After

what you did about Charlie, I don't see how. Can I trust you, dear?"

This led to a long discussion about Charlie, in which I explained to her that I had previously refused to be engaged to him until they had both got tired of each other, but that he had been unwarrantably premature; and Flora became satisfied at last, and we swore eternal friendship and mutual co-operation, and perfectly square and honest conduct in all future complications; then we kissed each other a good deal, and sat down to discuss the plan of the campaign in earnest. After mature deliberation, we decided that the first step should be a reconciliation between Flora and Charlie, and that, in celebration thereof, he should be made to give us a little dinner at Delmonico's, to which should be invited Fanny and Harry Hardpan, Prince Schamovitch and Laura, Lord Chowder and Lord Huckleberry, Iky Bullstock, and both of us girls. Under these circumstances, it is not at all a bad plan to have one or two old admirers. The dinner was to be arranged for the night after the arrival of the Cunard steamer, and we were all to hold ourselves disengaged accordingly. Dear Charlie was so anxious to make the *amende* to Flora, that he entered into the scheme cordially and without the slightest suspicion. Indeed he was a great deal too much pleased to be the entertainer of the two British noblemen to think of anything else. Moreover,

there was no man in New York who understood the art of giving a little dinner of this sort more perfectly than Charlie, and he was not sorry for the opportunity it afforded him of distinguishing himself; so we were happy and satisfied all round. I think my Lords Chowder and Huckleberry may travel far before again finding themselves at dinner with four such pretty and agreeable women as Laura, Fanny, Flora, and myself. Though not given to manifesting more astonishment than they could help, I was amused to see how completely they were taken by surprise. Chowder was a somewhat heavy blue-eyed blond, with a large light beard, and rather vacuous smile; but he had a sort of smart way of sharply dropping his eyeglass with a little twitch out of his eye, which, every time he did it, seemed to impart a flash of intelligence to his countenance. As I came to know him better, I accounted for it by the fact of his having suddenly to change the focus of his eye. He seemed intensely amiable and good-natured. He evidently had a sluggish protoplasm, and was very easily amused, but took his jokes in a heavy sort of way, just as some hunters do their fences—they always manage to get over, but bungle so much that they lose their place in the field. Now Huckleberry, on the other hand, was all “snap.” Tall, dark, thin, with a pure classical profile, and a bright sparkling eye, he took in the whole situation before we had finished the preliminary oysters, and

by the time we had done our soup, had proved himself a match for Flora, who is recognised amongst us all as having the quickest wit and the sharpest tongue for repartee of any girl in our set. She seemed to be an entirely new specimen to Huckleberry, and evidently piqued him by a certain brilliant *nonchalance*, which I fancy made him feel rather smaller than he had ever done in the society of any girl of the same age in his life before. Flora was not the kind of girl to stand the patronising air with which the young British Peer of immense landed estates and acknowledged talent is accustomed to address the young ladies of his own class in London. She was wise enough to see that if she wanted to hook her aristocrat, the best plan was to treat him upon thoroughly democratic principles. She rightly judged that the novelty of finding himself patronised, instead of patronising, of being condescended to, instead of condescending, would produce a strange and rather fascinating sensation. In the struggle to assert himself, to conquer and subdue this rebellious and independent belle, the chances were that he would fall in love. By the time the cigarettes were put upon the table, there was a glitter in his eye that convinced me he would fight Flora with her own weapons till he had subdued her; and I knew that if ever Flora met her match, she would fall hopelessly and desperately in love with him. It would not be a skin-deep affair

this time, as it was in the case of Charlie, but a real serious business. I should rather have preferred Huckleberry to Chowder myself: but, in the first place, I could not again interfere with Flora's affairs; in the second place, I don't think I should have had a chance with Huckleberry. It was Flora's "cussedness," to use an unladylike expression, which proved so irresistible to him, and my temper is calm and equable. And, lastly, the Earl of Chowder would be Duke of Gumbo on the death of his father; and Lord Huckleberry's father was already dead, so he would never be anything more than a Viscount. When Flora was Viscountess Huckleberry, I should be Duchess of Gumbo, and go in to dinner in London miles before her; so I devoted myself to Chowder. He was so soft and gentle and unassuming, I got quite to like him. He was not a bit like my idea of a lord.

The day following the dinner was race-day, and Charlie invited the whole party to drive out with him on his drag. I insisted on Fanny taking the box-seat—poor Fanny! Charlie had been a *passion malheureuse* at one time in that quarter, and she had married Harry out of pique. Then after he had lost her, Charlie seemed rather to regret it, until he fell in love with Flora. Now that we were both likely to be otherwise provided for, I thought it would only be kind to both of them to bring them together a little, and I knew Harry would not mind, as he

was otherwise engaged. Now I know all this is very wrong. I don't defend it—on the contrary I regret it. I am deeply penitent for my past follies ; but believe me, it was all not half so bad as it looks to the less innocent mind of Europe. This trifling with each other's affections, even if it does not lead to anything worse, is not a custom to be applauded ; but the social *convenances* of America lend themselves to such flirtations far more than do those of countries where the external restraints are so great that the very necessity which exists for them suggests the frequency of far graver consequences than we in New York know anything about. Besides, I wanted to sit next Chowder ; and how could I do that if I sat next Charlie ? And so it was arranged, and Schamovitch and Laura sat behind ; and I think it rather encouraged Huckleberry to find that Schamovitch, whom he had known in Petersburg, where he occupied a high social position, was so irretrievably captured, and so desperately in love with Laura Berstup.

Chowder and Huckleberry had both left cards on mamma ; and the next day being Sunday, mamma gave one of her Sunday dinners, with music, and a general society afterwards, as was her wont, and she and I sang duets together, and I felt all the time Chowder's blue eyes fixed upon me, sometimes through his glass, and sometimes without it. I had to devote myself to the world in general, but

I rather appeared to advantage in entertaining mamma's guests, and was not sorry that he should see how competent I was for the task ; besides, every now and then I fluttered up to him, and I could see by the brightening of his eye that he liked it. He was too unenterprising to make new acquaintances, and already began to look upon me as an old friend, so I felt pretty safe, and was amused to see how little success one or two other girls had with him to whom I introduced him. They pronounced him utterly stupid, and declared they could get nothing out of him—dear old Chowder ! That was because they didn't know how. English mothers and their daughters may wonder how it is that, though they have tried to catch Chowder and Huckleberry with untiring energy for the last seven or eight seasons, we American girls found so little difficulty. I can explain it quite easily. It is because in England the mothers don't allow their daughters to manage their own affairs ; and, even if they did, the latter are hampered with all sorts of restrictions of so-called propriety, which seems to us unnecessary. There appears to be a tendency of late to introduce European notions in these matters, but it will utterly spoil the market. The more American girls give up their own manners and customs for those of the foreign aristocrats they covet, the less likely are they to succeed in attracting them. In the cases of Chowder and Huckleberry, for instance,

those young noblemen were overcome with the novelty of the thing. Neither Flora nor I let a day pass without having a quiet hour or so with them. What with nice solitary drives, pleasant little dinners, theatres, and balls, we managed this easily enough. The "German," as danced with us, is most useful as a means of securing your prey for a whole evening; he has no means of escape. Thus young women with us are not afraid of being talked about in connection with young men, or *vice versâ*, as in England; while the young men, on the other hand, are not haunted by the dread that a stern parent will ask them their intentions, or a big brother inflict condign punishment on them for not behaving honourably. Such accidents have, it is true, been known, but only in very extreme cases; but they are not frequent enough to operate as checks upon "the course of true love." In London the young men devote themselves to the young married women, with whom the poor girls get no chance to compete, because they have so much less liberty, and are so closely guarded by chaperons; the consequence is, that they lack the necessary experience and practice. We are as much superior to them in flirtation, considered as a fine art, as an expert fly-fisher is to one who has never used anything but a worm and a pin.

As for Flora and Huckleberry, if she had had a twenty-pound salmon on a single gut she could not

have had harder work to play him. The way he dashed down the rapids and she after him was something frightful to behold. Just as she had reeled him up to the bank, so to speak, and she began to breathe, he would make a dash, or jump madly in the air, and nothing but the most consummate coolness, intrepidity, and skill prevented his breaking away altogether. At such a moment interference would have been fatal, and those most interested in her success wisely refrained from offering her either reproof, assistance, or advice. With Chowder it was a very different matter: he was like a sluggish old cat-fish; occasionally he made feeble attempts to break loose, but I never slackened my line for an instant, and soon found I had only to be watchful and patient to make sure of him. Matters came to a crisis during a trip which we made to Niagara under the following circumstances: Our party consisted of the Hardpans, Huckleberry and Flora, Prince Schamovitch and Laura Berstup, Edith Persimmon and Charlie, Chowder and myself. And by this time Charlie was becoming devoted to Fanny Hardpan, and Harry had long been rather a favourite of Edith's. Of course we followed our devices in visiting in pairs the spots which we considered to possess the greatest amount of natural interest and beauty; and Chowder and I, who were of an enterprising and exploratory turn of mind, determined to try to push

our way under the Falls to the point reached by Professor Tyndall. Encased in voluminous suits of tarpaulin waterproof, and led by a guide, we descended the stairs and crept along the slippery path that leads into the blinding spray. Chowder would not let the guide hold me, but took my hand and told him to lead the way ; and at last we came to a point where we had to wade, and where the spray was so dense that though the guide was only a few paces ahead he was invisible. At this point I slipped, and the noise of the rushing waters was so bewildering, the difficulty of breathing was so great, that I lost my presence of mind and clutched my companion wildly. I don't know whether he mistook my alarm for a more tender sentiment, but he responded by immediately clasping me in his arms—I should certainly have fallen if he hadn't—and then in a voice of thunder he suddenly bel-
lowed—

“Dearest Irene, I love you !”

He was obliged to roar, otherwise I should not have heard him on account of the noise of the water, and he could not say more at one time, for it was so extremely difficult to breathe. It was so unexpected, and I was so utterly unprepared, that I could only respond by a sort of inane scream—

“You don't tell me !”

Apart from being an Americanism, I have often thought since what a perfectly absurd reply this

was ; but he seemed quite satisfied with it, and apparently regarded it in the light of a consent, and I was too confused to know whether it was or not. Luckily I slipped again, and escaped the dripping caresses which, like some huge Newfoundland dog, he seemed determined to lavish upon me. I could just pant breathlessly, "Back ! back !" when fortunately the guide came, and finding I was completely exhausted, extricated me from Chowder's embrace—just a moment before that nobleman, unable to keep his own footing, fell flat on his back on the rocks—and carried me out of the rushing waters. I was quite afraid that Chowder had been swept into the river, and sent the guide back for him : poor fellow ! he was so much bruised that he required all my sympathy for some days afterwards ; but as I had become his *fiancée* in this accidental way, this was a duty as well as a pleasure.

The first thing Chowder did after straightening himself up and putting on dry clothes, was to make me promise not to tell. He said that the Duke and Duchess of Gumbo would be violently opposed to his marrying me. Considering that papa had promised to settle a million of dollars upon me as soon as I was engaged to him, I felt myself to be quite as good as they were, and could not conceive why they should object. He muttered something about my having such an unfortunate name ; but I told him that my father had been at some trouble to

trace his pedigree to the celebrated "Macgillicuddy of the Breeks," a Highland chieftain of a clan which has now become extinct, but that we in America attach no importance either to rank or family, and that I loved him for his own sake. Then he wanted to kiss me again, and said, that for reasons which were inexpressible, if my ancestor had been a Highland chieftain, he could not have been Macgillicuddy of the Breeks, and that there must be some mistake, and I was probably originally descended from the Irish Macgillicuddies of the Reeks. This doubt thrown over my pedigree made me feel very uncomfortable; for although we pretended not to care about such things, papa is very proud of his Highland ancestor, and, as I told Chowder, had even got his coat of arms. Chowder laughed in a ridiculous way, and said something about his trousers of arms, which I did not understand; but he often, like so many of his countrymen, made silly remarks. From the way Chowder spoke, I saw that the whole affair would have to be managed with the greatest care on account of his parents, and I did not even confide it to Flora, who had by no means succeeded with Huckleberry. In spite of the extremely intimate relations which subsisted between them, she could not get him to commit himself—so, privately, I enjoyed my little triumph over her.

Alas that my own mother should have been the one to ruin everything! No sooner did I tell her

of our engagement than her exultation knew no bounds. Nothing would satisfy her, on our return to New York, but to make it known. In vain I explained to her the peril of such a course. In vain did Chowder himself remonstrate with her; it was all to no purpose. In a week all New York was ringing with our engagement, and it had been announced in all the papers. Huckleberry dived off to Utah and San Francisco, without having declared himself, in a sort of panic, just at the moment when Flora thought she had brought him to the point; and I came in for some strong language from my cousin for having secured my own prize and frightened away hers.

Meantime Chowder had not sufficient decision of character to propose a wedding right off. The parental terrors were heavy upon him; he talked vaguely about being "cut off," whatever that may mean; and, in fact, doggedly resisted anything like prompt action, while he seemed more hopelessly in love than ever. To be honest, I cannot say that I reciprocated to the same extent; I had a *tendresse* for him, but certainly should never have thought of accepting him had he been Mr Smith of London. Meantime Chowder had been obliged, by the publicity of our engagement, to write to the Duke. We concocted the letter between us, and he enclosed a note and my photograph to the Duchess, who usually spoiled him and was more susceptible

to attack. After that we had nothing for it but to await the answer in an agony of suspense. Meantime, to clinch the matter, my father settled a million upon me—a fact which Chowder telegraphed to the Duke. How long the month seemed before the dreaded reply arrived, and what a terrible blow it was when at last it reached us! Chowder was literally crushed. His face became so limp under the emotion and agitation of his mind, that his eyeglass would no longer stick in his eye. It was useless to urge him to open rebellion; he was ordered peremptorily to return to his ducal parents, and to his duties in the House of Commons, and seemed incapable of resistance. Such is the tyranny of an effete and bloated aristocracy. How I raged against it! What chiefly aggravated me, was the idea that they evidently considered themselves superior to me. The Duke had the impertinence to talk about Chowder "marrying beneath him," as if the aristocracy of New York was not equal to any other aristocracy in the world. When I told Chowder this, he said that there could not be any aristocracy in a democracy; that he himself was rather democratic in his principles (he is a follower of Gladstone's, and there is no saying where he will end); but that, while he fully admitted my equality with him, he also accorded the same equality to my maid Biddy. I was going to retort upon him as he deserved, when I remembered that my cousin,

Maggie Macgillicuddy was actually a factory girl at fifty cents a-day at Lowell—her father, who was a stone-mason, having taken to drink. This confused me for the moment so much that I scarcely knew what to say, so I asked him whether he thought it would have made any difference supposing I had been a Van Twiller or a Persimmon? He said that it would not have made the slightest difference, and the objection would have been quite the same. As in England, it was not supposed that distinctions based upon the idea of birth or caste could possibly exist in a democracy which expressly repudiated them. Hence, all Americans who came to England were considered equal; no one ever thought of inquiring about their families; and, so far as marrying went, he considered all American girls equally charming, and me the most charming of all. This was not very logically expressed, but I understood what he meant, and it consoled me very much. He further tried to comfort me by assuring me that he had only to see his parents to make it all right. He attributed all the blame to its having been prematurely announced before he had time to prepare the ducal mind; and explained that to marry without arranging things first, would put us in a very awkward position if his family refused to receive us. He said I did not understand London society, and that I should never be able to bear the position in which we should be

placed ; but he had no doubt about smoothing over matters in a few weeks, when he would at once come back and make me "his own." This was highly unsatisfactory, but it was the best that could be done. What annoyed me most was Flora's sympathy, through which I could see a thinly-veiled satisfaction. She was in constant correspondence with Huckleberry, who wrote her most interesting letters from Utah, where he was being hospitably entertained by the late Brigham Young.

We had a very tearful parting ; and in spite of Chowder's protestations, I felt my heart sink within me when he turned away from me for the last time—looking, poor fellow, quite crushed and heart-broken. I think he suspected himself how small his chances were of success. It was very disagreeable to feel that all the other girls were canvassing my chances. Of course, as they had all envied me, they all secretly hoped he would be obliged to throw me over ; and this, I may just as well say, without further circumlocution, he did, in exactly six weeks from the day we parted. I will not recapitulate the reasons which made it impossible, the objections urged by his parents, which he was obliged to admit were insuperable, the agony which he described was racking his brain and lacerating his heart. It was far too well written and pathetic to be his own composition, and bore the trace of the delicate hand of his mother all through it. The revulsion of feel-

ing to which this disappointment gave rise is too painful for me to attempt any analysis of here. I now know that I have every reason to be deeply grateful to it, for it changed the whole current of my views and aspirations in life; and to it I owe the happiness I now enjoy; but it was inexpressibly distressing at the time,—wounded self-love, mortified vanity, blighted hope and affection—for I really found, now that I had lost him, that I had more affection for him than I had imagined—all combined to make me utterly miserable. I railed against mamma as the cause of it all, though I really don't suppose she did so much harm on the whole. I shut myself up, and refused to be comforted. The consolation of my own sex only enraged me less than the amiable attentions of the other. Charlie van Didntoffer, who was carrying on quite scandalously with Fanny Hardpan, had the impertinence to offer me "brotherly" sympathy, forsooth, as if I wanted his sympathy, or Fanny's either. It was quite shameful the way that pair drove round Central Park every day with ostentatious effrontery in one buggy, while Harry was carrying on in another with Edith Persimmon. Then to make matters worse came the marriage of Prince Schamovitch with Laura, and I was one of the bridesmaids, and had to endure the condolences of the other bridesmaids, some of whom were to have acted in the same capacity for me, and make myself

agreeable to the "ushers"—an institution you don't have at your English weddings, and a very good thing too. However, I will not let my ill temper run away with me—though even, after this distance of time, the recollection of what I suffered then seems to envenom my pen.

I was fortunate in being able to turn to my books and studies ; and I even tried going to a Bible-reading, which took place once a-week, and which was largely attended by the ladies of the fashionable world. It was considered quite consistent to go to this and to all the gaieties that were going on besides ; and yet I observed they seemed to make distinctions among themselves. For instance, Fanny Hardpan was a regular attendant ; and when Edith Persimmon came once, there was quite an objection made to her on the score of her being too fast. Now I would have thought that these were just the kind of people who should have been the most welcome, because of the benefit they might derive from meetings of this sort ; but after a little time I began to doubt whether they exercised any appreciable influence on the daily lives of those who attended them, and as I did not see that they did I gave them up. From all which you see that my mind was undergoing a change ; and when Huckleberry returned from the west four months later, I was able to watch the fortunes of Flora with far more charitable feelings than I supposed possible.

Indeed I felt sorry for her, for she was evidently really and honestly in love, and beginning to get uncommonly nervous about the result—which was not to be wondered at, considering the frightful warning she had before her eyes in my own case. So I determined to speak seriously to Huckleberry, and show him the harm he was doing to my cousin, and insist upon his either going back to England at once or proposing to her definitely. Huckleberry was very nice about it. He said he had no idea that Flora was really so “far gone;” that he was very “far gone” himself; that he thought Flora a girl calculated to make any man happy, and clever enough to fill any social position in any country, and one that any man might be proud of; and that he had never been in love with a girl in his life before, and had only delayed on account of the novelty of the situation; and he hinted that it would be a severe blow to Lord Somebody’s wife in England—he did not tell me her name—but that perhaps it would be the best way of ending “it”—he did not say what; but I thought it best to agree with him, so I said at random that “it” ought never to have been begun, at which he looked rather red and surprised, and took my hand and kissed it. And two hours afterwards Flora came bursting into the room, radiant with delight. Huckleberry “had placed his hand and heart at her disposal, and he had no tiresome family to consult, and he was in a great hurry to

get home, so the marriage would have to be in a fortnight, and would I be bridesmaid? and Huckleberry was the most rising young peer of his day, and sure to be Prime Minister some time; and when she was married I was to come and stay with her at Huckleberry Castle in England, and might marry Chowder after all,"—with a great deal more, all in a breathless torrent of bliss and expansiveness, which made me feel thankful that I had forgotten all my envious feelings, and been the means of securing her happiness; for I really think my conversation with Huckleberry turned the scale at the critical moment.

Flora's wedding was a very grand affair. The entire New York aristocracy honoured it with their presence, including the Van Twillers, Persimmons, Van Didntoffers, the Poppinjays, and the *crème de la crème* generally. Our old beau Charlie, Dick Persimmon, Tommy Straddle, Billy's son, and three or four more of the most distinguished members of the Spuyten Duyvel Club, were all ushers, and I was surrounded by a galaxy of lovely bridesmaids, whose names, together with an exact description of our dresses, are contained in the columns of the papers which appeared next day. In the same veracious chronicles will be found a list of the unusually costly and magnificent presents which came pouring in upon the happy pair, with their probable values attached; while the reporters vied

with each other in extolling the good looks of both bride and bridegroom, and in conveying to their interested readers a most minute and detailed account of their personal appearance and conduct upon the trying occasion.

A few days afterwards they started for England in the same steamer with the Schamovitchs, who had been making a tour in Canada, and I relapsed into a resigned condition, conducive to much moralising on the vanity of sublunary affairs, and felt very much as if the world was stuffed with sawdust. Little did I then dream of the thrilling nature of the episode still in store for me.

II.

For the next two years after my misfortune with Chowder, I oscillated a good deal. Sometimes I sought distraction in gaiety, and then swung back into study. One of my principal excitements was fighting papa in the matter of my settlement, which, now that there was to be no Chowder, he wanted me to consent to cancel. This I stubbornly refused to do, and, as will appear later, to good purpose. By degrees, I found myself becoming rather an awe-inspiring creature to the young man of the period, which was all the more aggravating to him, because, pecuniarily, I was so desirable.

Now and then one in a shy, timid sort of way would muster up courage enough to propose to me on quite inadequate encouragement; and one pertinacious man would not be content with four refusals. This made me rather cynical; and when I was not cynical, I was learned, with a materialistic tendency, and a theory of evolution of my own. Decidedly I was rapidly becoming disagreeable, and so, finally, I found myself drifting away from my old associates into a sort of literary *coterie*, where my talents were more appreciated, and where I could meet men whose conversation was more congenial to me than that usually indulged in by the Spuyten Duyvellers. And here I would wish, *par parenthèse*, to say a few words to those young gentlemen, for whom, I have a cordial and tender feeling. In the words of the old song, "We have lived and loved together;" so I am sure, if I venture to give them a little wholesome advice, they will take it in the spirit in which it is offered. I am speaking not only for their good, but in behalf of my own sex. I remember one evening half-a-dozen of us girls counting up the young men who could converse intelligently on any of the literary, scientific, or even political, questions of the day. When we had got up to two, we were obliged to stop. Now this is very hard upon us. We don't want to be driven to resort to old married men or foreigners for intellectual recreation: but what are

we to do? When you are not down in your eternal Wall Streets, you are out at Jerome Park, or looking out of the club windows; but as for informing your minds, and giving your naturally bright intellects some wholesome food to digest, which should make you instructive as well as agreeable members of society, you won't do it. No wonder we have to fall back on English dukes, or any distinguished stranger we can find, when our own countrymen will not qualify themselves properly to be the husbands of intelligent and well-educated girls. I am sorry to have to speak so sharply, but nobody seems likely to do it if I don't, and I feel that I owe you some explanation for having taken an Englishman when I had the whole Spuyten Duyvel Club to choose from. I have made it, and I hope you will ponder over it, and profit by it.

Thus it happened that, dining one evening with the celebrated Professor Bivalve, whose researches have done so much to throw light upon the early history of the human race in connection with the remains of jackasses recently discovered in a transition state in the western part of this continent, I found myself sitting next to a remarkably handsome man of about thirty; evidently, from his accent, English, and from his haughty look and polished manners, aristocratic. There was a breadth and power in his massive forehead, a light in his grey eye, and a decision in his strong, firm mouth

and jaw, which captivated me at once; in a word, he was a magnificent illustration of the survival of the fittest. I was evidently still susceptible, whatever I might have thought to the contrary. The brilliancy of his conversation was quite in keeping with his intellectual appearance, though it had not as yet been addressed to me, as we had not been introduced. My kind host, however, soon relieved us from all embarrassment on this score, by presenting him to me as Mr Tompkins. It took me a minute or two to recover from the blow which this very plebeian name inflicted upon my feelings, and in my confusion I quite lost some very curious facts which the Professor was narrating to us regarding his own special origin as bearing upon natural selection in general. However, I soon recovered, and, as an agreeable preliminary remark, I opened the conversation by asking my companion whether he did or did not consider the existence of Battrybius put in doubt by the voyage of the Challenger. It is needless for me to attempt to give here, in my imperfect language, the entirely new and startling theory in regard to the past history, the present condition, and the future prospects of the human race, which absorbed me by its entrancing interest throughout the whole of dinner.

Mr Tompkins found me such an intelligent disciple and listener, that he readily agreed to take me with him on the following day to investigate

some curious geological phenomena which have heretofore been overlooked on the banks of the Hudson, in connection with the Palisades. Indeed, all round New York, if people only knew it, there is an immense field of inquiry for the scientific mind. Mr Tompkins and I, regardless of the risk of chills and fever, examined it thoroughly. There was nobody to interfere with us; he never went near the gay and fashionable world. I was too happy to abandon it utterly in such delightful company, and thus keep him away from the snares of the other girls, who, although they could not have appreciated his lofty intellect, would certainly have been fully alive to his manly beauty. Mamma had apparently given me up as hopeless; I was quite out of her depth; and I did not think it worth while to introduce Mr Tompkins to her during the early stages of our acquaintance, as I felt sure they would not suit each other. The only aggravating thing about him was, that he never would for a moment leave the ground of science for that of sentiment. We chipped rocks and dissected molluscs together, but he appeared to be profoundly unconscious of the fact that he was chipping my heart and dissecting my feelings all the time in the most ruthless manner, and it seemed quite impossible to make him take a hint. He was apparently absorbed in working out his theory to the exclusion of every other consideration, till I got quite to hate

it; for, after all, whatever our origin may have been, or whatever may be in reserve for us in the future, it is evident that if the "species" is to be kept going at all, it must occupy itself with the present. I often tried in the most delicate way in the world to suggest this view of the question to him. Theory is valueless if we neglect the most favourable opportunities of practical experiment and test. Imagine my horror when, one day, in answer to these hints, he gave me to understand that he had completed his labours in the neighbourhood of New York; but that there was still a missing link of which he was in search, and that he could only hope to discover it by going out west and living among the Indians, where he could make the acquaintance of a squaw.

That afternoon I brought Obadiah—I forgot to say that was his dreadful name—to our house, introduced him to papa and mamma, and made him stay to dinner; it was getting too serious. The idea of his continuing his ridiculous investigations at the price of the most treasured feelings of my nature was insupportable. Moreover, I felt sure that he was under some extraordinary delusion. It was nonsense to tell me he did not care for me. It was impossible for two such congenial souls to be thrown together as we were, having every thought and interest in life in common, and not to care for each other. As for myself, I have

been so frank hitherto, that I may continue my confessions recklessly. I never knew what love meant till I met Obadiah. When I compared my weakness for Charlie, my inclination towards Chowder, with my devouring passion for Mr Tompkins, I felt indeed how little there was in name, in family, in wealth, or in rank. By the way, it had never occurred to me to ask him about either his family or his means; and when mamma cross-examined me about them, I was obliged to plead total ignorance. This alone shows pretty plainly how genuine my affection was for him. Next day we went by the ferry across to Staten Island, in order to examine a rock undergoing the process of spontaneous concentric exfoliation. He told me it would probably be our last excursion together. This announcement brought matters to a crisis. We were going up a steep hill, and he had given me his arm, when he told me this. I suppose he felt some kind of pressure on it. I know I did on my heart. I thought I should have dropped. Then he stopped, and looked kindly and gravely into my face. My eyes filled with tears, and I made a desperate but unavailing effort to look as if I was absorbed by the magnificent view; but I could see nothing except through a watery mist; and all the time I felt so angry with myself that I could have boxed his ears. Well, it could not be helped. He felt he had to say something; and, as

he was a very cool, composed sort of person, he suggested that we should look for a nice comfortable place to sit down. So we found a tree big enough for both our backs to lean against; and then he said, as he was going away so soon and might never see me again, and as we had become such great friends, he would tell me all about himself and his plans. Then the real cause of his indifference flashed upon me suddenly, and I felt sure that he was married; so I said, impulsively, "Oh, don't!"

"Don't what?" he asked.

"Don't tell me about her; where is she?" I almost sobbed.

"Either in Utah or New Mexico," he said; "I don't know exactly which; but it does not much matter. I can easily find the ones I want out West."

It was too awful. My wildest imagination had never pictured such a fearful catastrophe. It was all explained now; Mr Tompkins was a Mormon. He had been afraid to break it to me before, because he had not been sure of the extent of my passion; but now that I had been unable to conceal it, he was evidently going to propose to take me to Salt Lake City; and from there we should go on and join his other wives, about whom he apparently cared so little that he did not know whether the particular ones he wanted were in Utah or New Mexico. The wily and artful way in which he had

lured me into his toils, his wonderful devotion to science, had all been a snare by which to entrap my young affections. All this passed through my mind like a flash of lightning. All the hearts I had tried to break, all the affections I had deliberately blighted of youths whom I had wantonly encouraged to propose, rose up in judgment against me. How fearful was this retribution! In what a cruel form had my Nemesis overtaken me! sitting on the grassy hillside, just above that well-known village called, with a ghastly sort of appositeness, Tompkinsville. Mr Tompkins paused as if he had nothing more for the moment to say; and I felt that he was purposely giving me time to make up my mind. I was too fond of him to decide hastily in the negative. I know this may seem very horrible to some of my readers, but they must really make allowance for the vehemence of my feelings. I knew that if I did not marry him I should never wed. It was impossible for me ever to feel for another what I felt for him, and it became a serious question with me whether I should blight my whole existence in consequence of a mere prejudice against a custom practised by all the patriarchs most eminent for piety, and by the inspired prophets of the Bible. I thought it would all depend upon the share I should be likely to have to myself of Obadiah; but then how could I ask him how many he had got? He evidently did not care about them all, for he

had spoken only of the "ones he wanted." Now they might possibly be only two, in which case I should have a third of him ; and besides, I could trust to my own wit for establishing myself in the first place, and I had little doubt of forcing them both into the position of "ones he did not want," in time. Still, if instead of being two, there were six or eight whom he wanted, the case would be entirely altered. It was evidently of the first importance, before making up my mind, to find this out accurately. I internally decided that I would go if he could offer me one-fourth share of himself, or more ; but that for anything less than that I should refuse positively. As he maintained a persistent silence, when I had fully made up my mind to this I had nothing for it but to try and obtain the desired information.

"Are you very fond of those you want ?" I asked, timidly.

"I am fond of every object in nature which helps to produce the desired results," he said, with a smile.

I was not surprised that he alluded to his wives in this Platonic sort of way, as he was so absorbed in science that I had ceased to expect anything in the shape of sentiment from him ; but I did not like his allusion to the desired results.

"Have you many ?" I asked, with some hesitation.

"Many what ?" he inquired.

“Many results.”

Obadiah looked for the first time during our acquaintance thoroughly puzzled, and, I thought, a little confused.

“Very few,” he replied; “and those are, so far, very imperfect. Ah,” he went on, with his eye kindling with enthusiasm, and yet with a certain sadness, “how delightful it would be if you could come with me, to help me to discover the reason of the abnormal formation of their skulls!”

I was inexpressibly shocked. So this was all he wanted me to go West with him for! and this was his way of proposing to me!

“Never!” I exclaimed, with a passionate cry; “the very idea of such a thing fills me with disgust and indignation.”

He seemed surprised and pained at my vehemence.

“You compel me to explain myself in my own justification,” he said, in a more agitated tone than he had yet used. “I am aware I was to blame for inadvertently allowing an expression of a desire for your company to escape me, which may have betrayed a sentiment I have hitherto striven resolutely to conceal. Irene,” he went on, “you do not know how much I have suffered during the past month, and how difficult it has been for me to disguise my feelings. If I have refrained from telling you how dear you are to me, it is because I felt I had nothing to offer you.”

Nothing to offer me, indeed ! I thought, savagely. Does he call his wives and his results nothing ? But it was pleasant even to hear him confess his love, so I was silent.

"You force me to tell you what I had determined to conceal," he continued, "for I cannot bear to leave you under the impression that I am cold or insensible to your attractions ; but, situated as I am, I felt that it would be dishonourable to take advantage of our intimacy, and allow it to ripen into any warmer feeling."

Well, I thought, he seems to have some feelings of decency left in him after all ; and yet I confess to a tinge of anxiety at the notion that he might prove too honourable to take me with him, though I had not quite made up my mind to go.

"At one time, I confess," he added, "I had almost determined to make a clean breast of it to Mr Macgillicuddy, and throw myself upon his mercy."

"Mercy !" exclaimed I, by way rather of an oath than an echo. "What madness ! Why, how could you expect that either he or mamma would even listen to such a proposal ? Under no circumstances must you ever breathe to them what you have told me."

"Ah," he said, mournfully, "then I was right, and I should only have put myself in a false position ; so there is no hope."

"It seems to me," said I, sharply, "that you are in rather a false position already."

"Irene," he replied, pleadingly, "how cruel of you to taunt me with it, when you yourself have forced from me an avowal that I had resolved should be for ever buried in the most secret recesses of my heart!"

A bright thought struck me: perhaps he loved me so much that he would abandon all his other wives and their wretched little results, and his peculiar views, conceal the whole story, and agree that we should be married like reasonable people, and go and live decently in Europe, instead of in Utah.

I looked tenderly and tearfully into his face. His large expressive eyes seemed melting with the glow of his ardent love as he returned my gaze.

"Darling," he murmured.

It gave me courage; I would frankly tell him my thought. This was not a moment to stand upon ceremony; so I said, and I found myself blushing and stammering painfully—

"Don't you think you could give up your pe—pe—peculiar views?"

"My peculiar views!" he replied; "why, what can they have to do with it? I know I have a somewhat different theory from Darwin and Huxley, and perhaps it is not altogether orthodox theologically, but surely that need not be a barrier."

"Oh, I don't mean those," I said, pettishly, and perhaps a little incoherently; but I thought he was

trifling or trying to deceive me. "I mean *them*;" and I placed a stinging emphasis on "them."

"Them!" he replied; "who are 'them'?"

His obtuseness was more than exasperating—it was brutal. Why should he force me to name the creatures I loathed? But he had goaded me beyond the bounds of delicacy.

"Your wives," I almost screamed.

If he had been struck with a bullet through the heart he could not have given a more spasmodic start, and then his eyes expanded and his lips trembled, and his whole face expressed such terrified amazement, that I thought he had gone mad. He afterwards explained that he thought I had.

"I don't understand you," he gasped at last.

A ray of hope shot into my heart.

"Oh, tell me, you're not a Mormon!"

I was literally panting by this time in an agony of suspense, for upon his reply my future happiness depended.

It came at last in the form of an uncontrollable burst of laughter. I have seen many large men laugh, but I never saw any one laugh as Obadiah did when I made this announcement. Certainly my experiences with Englishmen on the two occasions when they have offered me their hearts have been very peculiar. One chooses the moment when we are so drenched and blinded with the spray of Niagara that we can scarcely speak, precipitately

to propose, and try to embrace me ; and the other, at the very crisis when his happiness is secured, and I am dying to be pressed to his heart, is rolling on his back on the grass in convulsions of stentorian laughter. As soon as he could control himself, Obadiah put my hand to his lips, and then clasping it firmly, and with the tears resulting from the violence of his risible emotions still streaming from his eyes, began to apologise. He explained to me that the women he wanted to go to the southern part of Utah to find, were the squaws of the Piute Indians ; that it was rumoured that their skulls were differently formed from the skulls of any other family of the human race, and presented very marked peculiarities when compared with the male skulls of their own tribe—a type quite unknown not merely among American Indians, but among people anywhere else. At least I think he said all this, but I may be mistaken, for I was a prey to such mixed emotions that I could not attend to him very closely. Mortification at the extraordinary and ludicrous mistake into which I had been led almost overpowered my delight at discovering it to be one, while my anger with Obadiah for laughing at me so immoderately was more than counterbalanced by the certainty that he loved me quite as immoderately. I never imagined it possible I could have been so humiliated, and at the same time so happy. Still,

I felt rather indignant with him for having misled me into such an absurd position, and made me appear so ridiculous. What could this insuperable difficulty have been which had made it impossible for him to tell me that he loved me, and even made him try to prevent me from caring about him, if it was not that he was already married? What was this awful mystery which raised so terrible a barrier between us? Indeed, before he had done telling me about the Piute squaws' skulls, he had gently dropped my hand, a shade of melancholy stole over the countenance so lately convulsed with merriment, and he heaved a deep sigh.

There was no need of reserve between us now: we knew we loved each other—for he could not be mistaken in regard to my sentiments—so I boldly said—

"Dear Obadiah, what is this fearful secret that you could not venture even to tell my father, that has made you suffer so much while we have been together, that has been the cause of the terrible misunderstanding to which I have been a victim?" At this I saw the corners of his mouth twitch, but I suppressed my irritation and went on: "Tell me, dear, what it is that you feel must keep us apart? I can bear anything, only do not leave me in this dreadful doubt and suspense."

"Dear one," he answered, "it is very simple, and there is very little mystery about it: the fact is, I

have not got any money excepting what I can earn by my pen, while you are very rich; and among gentlemen it is not considered honourable for a poor man to engage the affections of a girl who has a fortune, without first discovering whether it would be agreeable to the parents. Now, from what I had heard of Mr and Mrs Macgillicuddy, I felt quite certain that they destined you either for an American millionaire or a foreign nobleman; and as I supposed you would not marry without your parents' consent, and as I knew that it would be impossible to obtain this—and as, moreover, if it could be obtained, I should shrink from the suspicion, either on their part or yours, that your fortune had influenced me in the matter—I determined, as soon as I felt that our intercourse, which has been so delightful to me, was leading to danger, to start off at once on my search for the missing skull, upon which, I may say, one whole theory in regard to our origin is built.”

I am afraid I very nearly said, “Oh, hang our origin!” I know I felt it; for I was so completely puzzled by his novel and ridiculous theory about my being rich and his being poor, that I could not bother with his other theory. I had never heard of such a thing as a man, because he was poor, thinking he ought to keep away from a girl who was rich, or first ask her parents' consent, and absurd rubbish of that sort. Why, with us the

rich girls are besieged by the poor men, who do all they can to engage their affections; and the girls, as a rule, take tolerably good care not to marry them, though they don't mind getting engaged, just for the excitement of the thing. Edith Persimmon, for instance, has been engaged five times, and has never been jilted herself once; in every case she threw over the man. The notion struck me as so truly ludicrous that I thought I would pay off Obadiah in his own coin; and when he had finished his explanation, in tones of great solemnity and propriety, I went off into quite as violent convulsions of laughter as he had. The fact was, the objection was in reality so utterly absurd, that I saw that our union was secured, and I felt so happy that I really had something to laugh about.

"Oh, you goosey!" I cried; "all my money is my own, and nobody can prevent my giving it all to you; and I don't care about anybody's consent;" and I felt inclined to scream with delight and enjoyment. What a relief it all was! What fools we had both of us been!—he, through not knowing the manners and customs of the country, and I through impetuously rushing to conclusions, and acting upon them, which is also one of its manners and customs. However, all is well that ends well; and when he found I had actually been prepared to sacrifice everything to my love for him—even to being

content with only a share of him — he consented to waive his scruples, and take my money and use it as if it was his own. Why, as I knew I had plenty for both, it had never entered into my head to inquire whether he had money or not till mamma had asked me about it; and this reminded me that I had not said anything to him about his family; so I remarked—

“Well, now, we may consider all that foolish pecuniary matter settled; because, although papa and mamma may raise objections, I am master of the situation, thanks to the almighty dollar. I suppose, however, you will have to write home to your family about it?”

My experience with Chowder led me to suppose that this was an inevitable part of the performance.

“Oh dear, no,” he said; “that will not be at all necessary. The fact is, I have, so to speak, no family to write to; my parents are both dead. My father was a civil engineer, and had just money enough to send me to Eton and Oxford; but I have had to make my own way since then, as he died a poor man. I have a brother, who is on some Indian railway, and some more distant relations, who do not trouble themselves about my fortunes.”

This was a great comfort. The only thing remaining to be done was to announce it to my respected parents; but they were both out when I reached home.

"Mamma," I said, as soon as she came in from her drive, "I am engaged to be married to Mr Tompkins."

As I fully expected, she was furious.

"Irene!" she broke out, "I thought you were a girl to be trusted. You know I never interfere with your flirtations; but, in return, I don't expect you to engage yourself in this way to the first obscure Englishman that comes along. You have refused at least six men since Chowder's affair was broken off, the poorest of whom was worth half a million, and some of them worth a great deal more; and now, with all your experience, you go and throw yourself away on this Tompkins,—what Tompkins is he, anyhow? and what fortune has he got? Why, even if he was a Sir, or an Honourable, unless he had a large fortune, or was a distinguished statesman, or something of that sort, I never imagined you could have thought of him."

Just then the bell rung; it was Obadiah himself, who, in his blunt, straightforward way, would not wait until I had prepared matters, but must needs come and beard the lioness in her den.

"Here he is, mamma, to speak for himself," I said, as he entered the room.

"So, Mr Tompkins," she abruptly commenced, "it seems you and my daughter are engaged to be married?"

"Not without your consent," he replied, calmly.

This rather took mamma by surprise; she did not expect so meek a response, and continued in a milder tone—

“You know, we American mothers have a strong prejudice against our daughters marrying foreigners.”

“I was not aware of it,” he said.

“I mean, of course, foreigners who are not persons of distinction in their own country.”

“I am sorry I can lay no claim to any such distinction,” he observed.

Mamma got rather exasperated by these calm, brief answers.

“You are aware my daughter has a large fortune of her own?” she went on, with something approaching a sneer in her voice.

“It has been a matter of regret to me for the last month that it is so,” he replied, “as I am absolutely penniless.”

This remark struck me not only as illogical, but entirely wanting in common-sense, so I indignantly interposed. “This is a matter between Mr Tompkins and myself, mamma, with which neither you nor papa has any concern whatever.”

“Well, my dear, I will leave you to discuss that question with your father. And now, Mr Tompkins,” continued mamma, “as you have told us so frankly that you have nothing in the way of money, would you kindly inform us what you have in the way of family?”

I again rushed to the rescue before he had time to say anything.

"All the Tompkinses belong to the same family, mamma. You know the Virginia Tompkinses spell their name with a "y," and claim to be descended from the original Tompkyns who came over to Virginia with Captain Smith. It is now historically proved that he was best man on the occasion of the Captain's marriage with Pocahontas: don't you remember, dear mamma?"

I knew the history of her own country was not her strong point, and that she could not contradict me. "Obadiah is a younger branch of the same family," I continued; "are you not?" And I turned to him with an expression as nearly conveying a wink, as I thought safe.

"Very much younger indeed," he replied. "I am afraid my branch only goes back one generation."

"Only one generation!" exclaimed mamma. "What do you mean? you must have had a grandfather!"

"Two, madam," said Obadiah, very stiffly; "but I only know the name of one, and it was not Tompkins, it was Jones, which was my mother's name."

"Then you don't know who your father's father was?"

"I do not," said Obadiah, and he drew himself up with an air of haughty dignity which made him

look superb, as if in his absence of pedigree he defied the world. It proved to me that the pride of no birth could be more commanding even than the pride of birth. It seemed to cow mamma for an instant, and I took advantage of the pause to exclaim enthusiastically, "Why, I know my grandfather was only a gardener; and though you don't know it, perhaps yours was a lord." Then I got very red, and felt somehow I ought not to have said it.

"Irene, I am ashamed of you," said mamma, sternly. "You see, Mr Tompkins," she went on, "while in our own democratic country we are not usually very particular in making inquiries into the origin of the families with which we contract alliances, provided the money is forthcoming, it is not the same where foreigners are concerned. We wish our daughters to move in the very highest circles in the country of their adoption by marriage. With our democratic views it is very disagreeable for a girl to encounter the possibility of having to walk in after anybody because of the accident of her husband's birth. This is why really no American girl should by rights ever marry any one less than a duke; and then," she added, thoughtfully, "supposing he was not the premier duke, she might still be placed in an inferior position to the premier duchess. Now here is Irene's own cousin Flora married to Lord Huckleberry; just think if she

were to meet Irene in society as Mrs Tompkins, what a difference there would be in the position of the two girls! I am quite sure, Irene, you could not bear it," and she turned to me.

"Your daughter would never be called upon to bear it," said Obadiah; "she would never, as my wife, be likely to move in any society where she would meet Lady Huckleberry."

"Worse and worse," said mamma—and I confess I did not much relish the prospect; but it was far better than that other fate I had nerved myself to encounter for Obadiah's sake, so I determined to put a bold face on the matter.

"If ex-President Grant could stand going in after people, I suppose I could," I said, with a pout; "at any rate, I am not going to give up Obadiah for all the Lady Huckleberrys in the world." You see I was becoming desperate. I was rewarded by the grateful look my lover turned upon me.

"Well, my dear," said mamma, with a bitter sneer, "I have said everything that as a mother it was my duty to say; you may please yourself—only don't reproach me if you are unhappy in your degradation, and don't expect me to come and pay you a visit, to be looked down upon as the mother of Mrs Obadiah Tompkins. I shall go and stay with Flora at Huckleberry Castle, and we can meet at railway stations or in picture-galleries."

With this my mother marched solemnly from the

room, and left me to console myself with my darling. Obadiah was a good deal surprised at the suddenness with which she collapsed, and said English mothers did not give in so easily; but I explained that as the daughters here never give in at all, and as, after all, it was I, and not she, who was going to be married, she knew very well that sooner or later she would have to beat a retreat, and, like a wise woman, she saved her dignity by not allowing herself to be drawn any further into a struggle which could only end in defeat. He was very much relieved at the unexpected turn affairs had taken, and we sat together on the couch and had a lovely time.

In spite of my mother's threat, my father directly avoided any encounter with me on the subject of finance. Where she had been vanquished, he felt that he had no chance, and he contented himself with behaving as rudely as possible to my intended upon all occasions.

Obadiah at once agreed to postpone indefinitely his journey to the country of the Piutes, and content himself with the skull which I offered him as a substitute; and in order to avoid any protracted gossip in regard to our affairs, we determined that our marriage should take place with the least possible delay, and in the most private manner. Mamma, of course, would have nothing to do with the preparations, though my parents were both to

be present at the ceremony ; and I contented myself with Rose Poppinjay and Edith Persimmon as bridesmaids ; while Charlie, who, I must say, is always willing to make himself useful, did duty for Obadiah, to whom I had introduced him some time before, in the hope that he might take advantage of the opportunity to improve his mind.

We were married in the little church round the corner, and started immediately afterwards to spend a quiet fortnight at Levox. As my fortune produced an income of about £12,000 sterling a-year, Obadiah agreed with me that there was no spot better adapted than London for spending it. So in due time we took our passage in a Cunarder ; and I once more turned my back upon my native city, to begin life under entirely new conditions. Almost the first person I met upon the deck was, to my amazement, Edith Persimmon.

"Why, Edith !"

"Why, Irene !"

These two words, ejaculated with immense emphasis, is our invariable mode of expressing surprise and delight at an unexpected meeting of this sort. Then I saw a number of young men hovering around her, and her hands full of bouquets ; and I knew that she was bound for Europe, and that all her beaux, married and single, had come to see her off. Under ordinary circumstances, we should have been similarly attended. I should think, for

instance, when we went to see the Huckleberrys off, we must have been a party of fifty or sixty. But Obadiah was of a very retiring disposition, and hated what he called "functions" of this kind. Since our marriage, all our thoughts had been in common; so I, of course, quite agreed with him, and we had slipped on board quite quietly. However, as all Edith's friends were mine, there was no escape now; so we had a grand kissing, and hand-shaking, and leave-taking. The young men rather like these occasions, as they can take advantage of the pretext of sudden and overwhelming emotion to steal the chaste salute from the departing fair one, for which they have so long been pining in vain. The poor thing being in a kissing, tearful mood, grows confused with so much embracing, and thus gets taken advantage of. I saw it happen to Edith in three different cases, and she seemed scarcely to have known what she was doing. Obadiah, who was looking on with a view of discovering "the hidden principle of nature which was at work," said she was perfectly well aware all the time what she was about; but I think science makes people a little cynical. However, as he said it, of course it must have been true. "Why, my dear," said Edith, as soon as all her admirers had hurried down the gangway, at the imminent risk of jostling one another into the water—for they had clung to the ship to the last—"why,

my dear, only to think of our going over together in the same steamer ! why, it's perfectly splendid ! "

"But are you going over alone ? " I asked. " I don't see Mr and Mrs Persimmon. "

"Didn't you hear, dear, that Flora sent to invite me to pay her a visit at Huckleberry Castle. She said there was no room for papa and mamma, but that she would be glad to see me alone, and they were expecting a visit from Lord Chowder. So, as dear Captain Codd is such a friend of ours,—you know, we made our last passage with him,—he agreed to take me under his charge. Besides, Iky Bullstock, and old Mr and Mrs Barebones, and Mary, are crossing with us ; so I shall not feel a bit alone ; and now I shall have you as well—and I am never sick ; so I expect to have a beautiful time. "

And here I should observe that I had received a letter from Flora, couched in rather cool terms, congratulating me on my marriage ; but regretting that it should have happened just at the moment when she was going to invite me to pay her a visit. Now that I was married, she supposed I was too much absorbed in my husband to care about paying visits,—which was a delicate way of insinuating, that though she would have been glad to see me alone, she did not want Obadiah. Thus it came to pass that Edith Persimmon was asked in my stead, and that I now found her on board the same steamer

with myself, starting in pursuit of Chowder. I was standing with my arm through Obadiah's, as I made this reflection, and thought how nearly Chowder had been my fate; and when I compared what it really was with what it might have been, I felt inclined, then and there, to fall on my knees with gratitude; for I would not have exchanged my Obadiah for a million of Chowders, or have descended from my lofty position as Mrs Tompkins, to be her Grace the Duchess of Gumbo, for anything the world could offer. Obadiah said that this sentiment arose from a hidden law, which had been prevented by the intellectual forces of nature from development, in the most civilised portion of the human race, but that in my case it was struggling to find expression; and he hoped in time I should be morally as much superior to the rest of my sex as the recently discovered male aborigines of the eastern part of New Guinea are to the most advanced men of science in Paris, or London, or New York. This may give the reader a hint as to my husband's evolution theory. I may be able to refer to it more fully on another occasion; for the present I must return to Edith. She was extremely anxious to know all about Chowder. In other words, she wanted what in America are called "points," and in England "tips," from the one person who, of all others, could give them from personal experience. She evidently considered it in a manner providen-

tial that she, bent upon the capture of that special coronet, should find herself making a passage in the same steamer with one who had already captured the heart to which it was supposed to belong.

"Edith," I said, "you don't need any instruction of this kind. You have had enough experience, goodness knows, without asking me. You can't catch him under a waterfall, as I did, because there are no waterfalls worth talking about in England; but if you can't get into difficulties in the hunting-field, for instance, and sprain your ankle, and both lose your way, and then—oh, Edith," I broke off, "how silly you are—or rather, I am! I will not go on talking such nonsense. There is only one thing I will tell you: it is not Chowder that you will find any difficulty with, but the Duchess. She will be your Plevna. Take the Duchess, my dear, —assault her, sap her, mine her, starve her—anything you like—only capture her. She and you together must then lay siege to the Duke, and the walls of Chowder, like those of Jericho, will fall down the moment you blow your trumpet, if your flag is floating triumphantly from the parental battlements."

Obadiah came up just as I had exploded in this magnificent burst of allegory, and I felt so dreadfully ashamed of myself when I remembered how differently a Papuan woman would have advised

any young aboriginal female in regard to matrimony, that I found my eyes filling with tears at this descent from my high ideal.

Two years previously, as the Countess of Chowder, I should have looked forward to a London season with a delight bordering upon frenzy. Now, as Mrs Obadiah Tompkins, deeply interested in the problem of humanity, I anticipated, with a far keener and more real enjoyment, a quiet life with my husband in a suburban villa, surrounded by a congenial society of his literary and scientific friends. I will not describe the intensity of my devotion to him, nor the absolute unity of our feelings and aspirations, for there are none of my married acquaintances who could sympathise with or understand it. He always insisted upon my sitting near him when he wrote, because, he said, I inspired him; but I dare not flatter myself that it is due to this that the remarkable series of articles which have appeared in the 'Nineteenth Century,' signed "Obadiah Tompkins," on "The Moral Attributes of Physical Forces," should have produced so profound a sensation. Their importance may be gathered from the fact that we are credibly informed that Mr Gladstone is at this moment writing a reply to them in a series of articles entitled "The Physical Attributes of Moral Forces," and that the entire subject is to be discussed at a later period in a "Symposium." The more I think of it, however,

the more I feel that the true arena for debating topics of this kind is the House of Commons. It is only natural that, being an American, I should be strongly Conservative; and I need scarcely add that Obadiah entirely shares my views. He feels with me that it is not to be tolerated that all the scientific talent should be on the Liberal side of the House, and that Dr Lyon Playfair and Sir John Lubbock are to be allowed to have it all their own way on a certain class of questions. We have therefore made up our minds that he is to stand at the next general election. I confess that it is not without a certain feeling of triumph that I am looking forward to the day when Obadiah will be called upon to join a cabinet, of which Huckleberry will probably be a member.

Meantime, Flora has fully justified my expectations. Her beauty, her brilliant talent, her great adaptability and powers of imitation, enabled her to assume her new *rôle* with eminent success, and she soon secured the admiration, I had almost said devotion, of the leading personages of London society. Thus she gallantly fought her way into the front rank of that set in which Lady Twickenham and the Hon. Mrs Hurlingham are such distinguished ornaments. Before the first season was over, she had got herself enormously talked about; and there was a certain reckless dash about her, which captivated all who found them-

selves drawn within the influence of her magic circle. Chowder was one of her most assiduous worshippers, and Edith had some difficulty in luring him off. Flora, however, far from being jealous, made use of her friend as a sort of decoy, and the two were inseparable. By these means Edith made a round of country-house visits under most favourable circumstances, for no one thought of inviting the Huckleberrys without Miss Persimmon; and thus it happened that she found herself a guest at "Clam Towers," the seat of the Duke of Gumbo, and in the most advantageous position for laying siege to the Duchess. Curiously enough, I had, in advising Edith, underestimated the lasting nature of the impression which I had produced upon the susceptibilities of his lordship. When that enterprising young woman, after infinite exertion, had vanquished the Duchess, she found her blandishments altogether powerless to captivate Chowder, who has given out that he never intends to marry, and who entertains a sincere and respectful friendship for Obadiah and myself. Edith, therefore, has abandoned the pursuit, and, as she has made a sufficient number of aristocratic friends of her own, has parted company with Flora, and has obtained quite an independent position both in London and Paris, at which gay capital she is at present disporting herself with some newly-arrived Americans, to whom she is temporarily attached.

It remains, therefore, still a matter for conjecture to what nationality her noble husband, when she finally captures him, will belong. Mamma has written to Flora, proposing a visit ; but Flora wrote back that she had not a single room in the house to spare. When the latter heard that all London was talking about the remarkable lecture which Obadiah delivered the other night at the Royal Institution, she was foolish enough to give us an opportunity of refusing an invitation to Huckleberry, with which she thought fit to honour us. We finally met at the South Kensington School of Arts. Perhaps I ought to have said, what my modesty shrinks from, that I was as much talked about by this time as Obadiah. In fact, without meaning it, we had suddenly appeared upon the social horizon of a certain class of London society which prides itself upon its intellectual attainments, and had taken it by storm. This led to our being forced upwards, whether we liked it or not ; and upon the evening in question I was conscious of a sort of buzz of admiration going on in my immediate vicinity, when Flora rushed into my arms ; and I was further conscious that it was I, and not she, who caused it. I went and saw her next day, and made the discovery which suggested this record of my tender recollections, for I thus became aware that I had developed a great deal more heart than I ever imagined I possessed, while she seemed entirely to

have lost any she ever had ; so I went home to Obadiah, a sadder and a wiser woman.

I thought my little history would convey a moral if it were written, which my readers could find out for themselves, the more especially as Obadiah said he did not mind the publicity of so much that is usually considered confidential, if I thought it would do any good. So I have written because I hope it may ; not to the society of London—I almost fear that is past redemption ; but my own old society, to which these tender recollections more especially refer, is still young and fresh enough to improve. I have not meant to expose its faults ungenerously, or to dwell too severely upon its weaknesses. At all events, I will comfort myself with the reflection that those who honestly feel that I have maligned them will be far more likely to forgive me than those whose consciences convict them, and to whose forgiveness, therefore, I am indifferent.

NAN: A SUMMER SCENE.

By L. B. WALFORD.

[MAGA. AUGUST 1875.]

THE London season being at its height, with all its turmoil and its witchery, can any one spare a moment to notice a sad little face peeping out of the window of a railway cab just driving into Paddington station?

The cab draws up at the end of a long line of cabs, and the footman outside jumps down to open the door.

Out steps Nan, bag and parasol in one hand, purse in the other; and very grave indeed she looks as she solemnly inquires the fare, and marches into the station, followed by Thomas.

Can this shabby little creature be the butterfly who but yesterday fluttered and spread her wings among the gay crowds, gayest of all herself, full of busy idleness, bewildered enchantment, ecstasies of bliss and woe? Ah! poor child, her day was a short one, and now it is over.

It is hard to pass the pleasure-loving stream and go against it.

To remember that a few hours before, she had felt herself—she, even she, child, sprite, insignificant drop in the bucket as she really was—to have been for the time transformed into a princess in fairy-land, with all sorts of dreams, and fancies, and possibilities hovering over her ; and then suddenly to wake and find herself shaken up into a little red-haired girl going away in a hack-cab.

Nan is dowdy, too, in her travelling costume. It is the same in which she came up to town six weeks before, and very neat and becoming she thought it then ; but six weeks of fresh muslins, her new silk, and incessant smartness, have made the old grey seem dim.

And then the heat of this June day !

The finest and softest of white dresses abound in the park, and fans flutter, and parasols sway gracefully backwards and forwards. On her way to the station, Nan has passed carriage after carriage turning in thither, probably driving through, to return to the great rendezvous an hour later, when she will be many miles away.

Then when evening comes, she knows that her aunt and cousins will be preparing for that delightful party to which she, too, had been invited, and to which she might have so easily gone if only the Wyatts had fixed Friday instead of Thursday for her coming to them.

This visit to the Wyatts has been twice postponed already, and Aunt Eliza, smiling, but serious, thinks it will hardly do again.

Nan submits to her fate.

She thinks Mr Lefevre will be a little disappointed, and Captain Neville a little more still; but I cannot say that she has anything beyond the smallest and most complacent of regrets for her forlorn partners.

She does not like leaving Queen's Gate, however. *That* is quite another thing.

This visit is the point towards which all her lines have converged for the last eight or ten months.

It was projected in the autumn; and given up, taken back into favour, thrown out and reconsidered at least half-a-dozen times before the great decision was arrived at.

For it is a long way from the stony hills of Westmoreland to the metropolis; and country maids like Nan Church, whose life goes round and round as if it were turned by one of those long-suffering horses in the old farmyards, think a great deal more of a single day's journey, than some of our more delicate and fashionable young madams do of a voyage round the world.

What preparation it takes! What forebodings on the part of Granny does it occasion! What timid exultant dreams on the part of Nan does it give rise to!

Hours and hours have the two spent together with only old Trueman as coadjutor, contriving that wonderful wardrobe. The fashion-book has worn itself to death in their service. The maids sit at their seams in the workroom unceasingly. And when the climax is at length attained, is it not seemly in their eyes, cunning in its devices, heroic in its concealments? What though it might—it probably would—have made Worth shudder and sicken?

Does Nan forget these days? No, and she never will.

Many and many a time in the midst of her vortex they rise before her, and her heart gives a little tender ache for the foolish things, feeling as if somehow she does them a wrong in that they have grown to look odd and plain, and all but unwearable.

They are not needed, either.

Aunt Eliza gives her dresses and bonnets; and the silk that Granny had fondly hoped might be made up by her cousin's maid, is returned gorgeous from a West End dressmaker; but for all that, the child's heart has never grown hard and cruel to the old things, and when the last day comes she bravely dons the sober grey with its plaintive tints, and betakes herself off in the cab, much the same little Nan Church to all intents, as when she hugged and kissed dear Granny before all the carriages at Tebay Junction.

Ah, well ! her great visit is over.

There only remains her fortnight at the Wyatts, and with this she would fain dispense.

It is years since she saw her cousins, and who can tell what sort of young maidens Edie and Detty may have blossomed into, in the interval ?

The Honourable Edith and Henrietta Wyatt are not in town this season.

When their mourning for the old uncle who left Dick all his money was over, it was too late in the year, and Lady Wyatt has not been well. Lord Wyatt goes up and down ; Dick has been away since Christmas ; Walter at Christ Church is glad to have his "Long" at home, and Dolly at Eton has no voice in the matter.

Accordingly they are all at Wyatt Hall, and Nan wishes they were anywhere else.

To begin with, she is afraid of going. Aunt Eliza demands why ?

She is afraid of Lady Wyatt.

A more groundless fear never existed in the bosom of a Caffre.

She is afraid of Lord Wyatt.

More groundless still, and more idiotic.

She is afraid of the girls, of Dick, of Walter, of Dolly, who is up to her shoulder ; afraid of the house, afraid of the servants. This is what she would like to say, but dares not, to Aunt Eliza.

So she stops abruptly at her fear of Lord Wyatt.

Of her own uncle !

(Aunt Eliza is Nan's aunt on the other side, and is rather proud of having a niece who can call a peer of the realm her own uncle.)

Yes. He may be her uncle or not, but she is afraid of him.

To this she sticks so fast, that Aunt Eliza deigns to expostulate.

Nan is foolish, unreasonable, unrelation-like, if there is such a term, altogether fanciful and absurd. Come, she must not be silly ; but above all, silly or not, she must not *show* that she is.

Accordingly Nan goes off, doing her best to keep her quakings hidden.

She is dull and sad, and very shy.

Queen's Gate had grown familiar, and the happiness she had felt there suddenly assumes gigantic proportions in the retrospect.

She cannot think of anything but the past, and as Thomas hands her her ticket, with his soft assurance that all is right, she is conscious of a faint melancholy disinclination to going anywhere but back with him. For is he not even now bound for the enchanted ground again? Are not balls, *fêtes*, flower-shows still abundantly in store for him, and does not he look impatient to be off?

The poor outcast will soon be deserted by her last friend. She sees the white stockings go farther and farther, and grow smaller and smaller,

then suddenly go out like the distant speck of a lighthouse, and once more the shock of being only a little red-haired girl instead of a fairy princess, comes over Nan.

By this time she is seated in the dusky blue oven, indicated to her as a first class.

She looks daintily round upon the cushions. Dust everywhere, invincible, inevitable.

The little lady takes out a thick green veil, and proceeds to envelop herself in its folds. Granny had tied it round Nan's head when the parting came, for, "My dear," says the old lady, "it will keep you tidy."

Not for worlds would she hint, what she nevertheless believes to be the case, that there is not a skin like her darling's in Westmoreland.

Aunt Eliza and Laura Church, however, have not been so reticent, and Nan has learnt to know that the green veil may have other uses than to keep her tidy.

She is anxious about her first appearance at the Wyatts.

Not very anxious, chiefly caring because of the impression it will produce at Queen's Gate.

Will any one meet her at the station? Hum! She changes her gloves.

Is her neck-tie smooth? Pulls out the bows.

Gets nervous. Begins to dread the arrival more than ever.

After an hour's unbroken monotonous travel, with only her own thoughts for company, the London life has grown dimmer, and Wyatt Hall stands out prominently in her mind's eye.

She has time to conjure up horror upon horror ; to grow restless, excited, miserable ; to exclaim a hundred times, "If it were but over !" yet to feel almost thankful for the respite, as she is still being hurried along. At length the train slackens speed. Nan wildly tears off the veil, gives her hat a lurch on one side, and a hair-pin falls into her lap.

She doubles up the veil, stuffs it into her pocket, whence a long green string protrudes, frantically settles the hat, bursts her glove, and has hard work to be sitting quite calm and composed when the train draws up.

Calmness and composure thrown away ; no carriage, cart, or wheel-barrow belonging to the Wyatts is at the station.

Nan gets out unassisted, feeling severely that her days of princess-ship are over ; and she has redeemed her box, and the train is off again ere anyone asks whither she is going.

Suddenly she is taken hold of, in the midst of a crowd of laughing voices.

Edie, Detty, Miss Blisset, and one or two children all together explaining, welcoming, apologising, sorry for their fault, and declaring it was not their fault, in a breath.

The little traveller is bewildered, and very meek.

A servant seizes her trunk, her shawl is drawn from her arm, and her bag is about to follow, but to this she clings.

"Now, you are ready," says her eldest cousin. "It is so nice that you are really come at last, Nan. We thought you were going to put us offaltogether."

"People never keep country engagements," cheerfully suggests the bright-eyed Detty, on her other side. "And you must have hated leaving town just now. But, you know, we did want to see you again so very much."

Nan tries to murmur some reply, but she is guiltily conscious that the desire has not been reciprocal.

How kind they are, these unknown relations! How foolish of her to have minded putting on the old grey dress, when they are in brown holland, and wear the most ancient of garden gloves!

Yet how nice they look! Edith, a slim, gracious maiden, not a hair of whose little orderly head is turned the wrong way; Detty, frizzle-pated, sparkling. Both so kind, gentle, and full of soft lively prattle, that she cannot choose but be at her ease with them.

They ask if she is fond of riding? She may be, but it is an undeveloped affection.

Driving? Also latent.

How charming! Edith will drive her, Detty will teach her to ride.

They will have matches at croquet and archery.

They will be on the river from morning till night. Nan begins to laugh and look forward, scarcely crediting her own good fortune. No one could be stiff in such good fellowship.

"You must try not to find us dull," says Edith. "Some people are coming here to-morrow, and Dick comes to-night. Then by-and-by there is going to be a ball at one of our neighbours'. I am so glad you will come in for the ball, Nan."

This is said as they are alighting, and Nan is doing her best not to show anew her quakings at the notion of a formal entry.

In a moment they are dispelled ; Detty is at her side, saying, "Come to the school-room first, dear, and have tea. Mother is in her room ; you need not see her till dinner-time. Miss Blisset gives us tea in the school-room just now."

Miss Blisset, the rosy, jolly soul of good-nature, whose daily excitement it is to preside at this entertainment, politely begs Miss Church will take off her things first, if she feels inclined. Is Miss Church tired ?

Dirty is more properly the word, and Nan owns she is dirty, but will have her tea first.

So she sits down, and drinking the hot liquid after her drive and her journey, gets a red nose, and is conscious that she is looking her worst.

"I thought Nan had been pretty," begins Edith,

when the toilet separation had taken place, "but I don't know that she is. She looked so pretty at first."

"She has a good figure at any rate."

"I like her."

"So do I."

"Edie, do you think she will have a dress for the ball?"

"Oh yes, of course, dozens."

"Not if she has exhausted them all, you know."

"Well, if she has, there is plenty of time to get another, or an old one could be refreshed. That was why I mentioned it, and I will take care to say more about it to-night."

"Edie, I suppose we must be in white to-night."

"Why to-night? The blue *bâties* will do very well."

"You know Dick likes white, and he does not care for blue."

"Oh, Dick! Yes, I suppose we must. I wonder if Dick will be good to Nan."

"He will never notice her."

Nan comes down to the drawing-room a different creature. The red nose has disappeared, and a pair of shell-pink cheeks have come in its stead.

Edith looks at her cousin in wonder. Lady Wyatt makes the kindest and most unmeaning of speeches. Lord Wyatt follows suit, and then to

Nan's amazement she discovers that the room is full of people.

The girls had let her infer that they were alone. They had spoken of people who were coming the next day, but had never mentioned any being with them at the time. Then who is this old gentleman in the corner, and his counterpart on the rug? Who is that on the sofa? Who followed her into the room?

Detty laughs at Nan, for these sort of people are always there. "We did not think of telling you," she says. "We forgot them. We call ourselves alone to-night."

From which Nan infers that there are two ideas of solitude.

After dinner the cousins go out of doors, and grow confidential walking up and down the gravel paths.

Nan knows she has on her embroidered slippers, and would fain keep on the grass, but feels rather ashamed of thinking of such a thing, for there is something about the Wyatts, simply attired as they are, that shows they have never in their lives thought about economy.

Edith, in her thin kid shoes, is at this moment walking sedately along a pebbly path, discoursing upon coming guests.

"First, Nan, there is Dick's friend, Lord Hefton. He is younger than Dick, but they were at Christ

Church together. He is the most good-natured man, and never in time for anything. *Everybody* likes him. Then there are the Bushes. Sir John is just Sir John; there is nothing about him the least different from every other Sir John in England. Lady Bushe is rather nice. She is very tall and thin, and you think at first that she is going to be a dreadfully precise person, and of all people in the world, she is the very least. She does just what Augusta tells her. Oh! I wonder how you will like Augusta!"

"Who is Augusta? Their daughter?"

"No; niece. She is a very fine lady now. She does not often condescend to come and see us; but she has overdone herself in London, and they are coming for ten days to recruit. We used to know them intimately, and always called her 'Gus;' but now she does not like that. She says Augusta is a heavenly name."

Nan laughs.

"But, you know, in many ways she is very nice, and she is really very pretty, and she dresses beautifully."

"But you don't care for her, Edie?"

"Yes, I do—in a way. She is always very kind to us, and gives us such lovely presents. Look, this locket I have on she gave me on my last birthday. She is always sending Detty and me things she has worked, or little sketches of places here-

abouts—and she does draw so beautifully—and she sings too. I daresay you will like her immensely.”

“And who are the others?”

“Mr Dallie is one, and Dick’s friend, Mr Burnand.”

The faintest possible change in Edith’s voice makes Nan wait for more.

“Mr Dallie is delightful.”

“Oh!”

“He will do whatever you tell him, and you can order him about just as you like. And he makes bouquets, and gets up charades, and games, and anything you want done. And he helps you so with dull people, if it is a wet day. He is always in request wherever he goes, for he can do everything.”

“And Mr Burnand?”

“Oh, he! He can’t do anything. He is a *great* friend of Dick’s.”

“Is Dick coming with him?”

“No; Mr Burnand comes to-morrow—Dick will be here to-night.”

“Oho! it’s Mr Burnand, is it?” swiftly concludes the shrewd little cousin. “I wonder if I should be asked to be a bridesmaid!”

Unconscious Edith steps serenely on, and Detty comes to call them indoors.

Music is wanted, and accordingly music, such as it is, is given; and then the sisters conduct their visitor to a delightful solitude opening out of the

gallery, where, if inclined, they are at liberty to take refuge from the drawing-room society.

"And so we come here whenever they get *too* humdrum," whispers naughty Detty; "and whenever we have our own friends, they like it too. Mr Burnand always comes, doesn't he, Edith?"

Edie and Detty are getting charmed with their cousin; it seems as if they had really known her for years, and only needed bringing together to reveal all that past knowledge.

Time passes. "I wonder when Dick will be here," observes Edith, for the twentieth time.

"Perhaps he has gone off somewhere else, as he did last time," suggests her sister.

"Of course he will come, Detty, when he has asked Mr Burnand."

Detty smiles, Nan laughs outright.

"Oh," cried the poor thing, in dire confusion, "how nice this recess is!"

Very nice, but not in the least laughable; and Edith's cheeks burn.

"How long is it since Dick was here last, Edith?"

This from Detty, in a good-natured attempt to turn off the awkwardness.

"Why, does he not *live* here?" demands their cousin.

Oh, dear, no. It appears that Dick is very seldom there. He is in France, Italy, Germany, India, Hongkong, anywhere and everywhere but at home.

However, he is older now, and papa thinks he is settling down.

Oh, he is a great deal older than they are—he is over thirty. Isn't it a dreadful age? He hardly seems like their brother at all.

It is clear to Nan that they are greatly in awe of Dick. She has suggested, do they ever go about the world with him? They are quite amused. How could they? He does not want them; he would not know what to do with them. Oh yes, he is as kind as he can be, only he seems so much older.

Nan will not like Dick, she feels sure. Why is he coming home just when she is here? She wishes he would keep away. He must be something quite different from soft spooney William Church, who was always so polite, escorting them all from place to place, and taking as much interest in his mother's parties as she did herself.

She did not very much care for William, but his kindness had won her gratitude.

As for this Dick, she is afraid of him, and knows he will despise her.

The sisters, too, defer to his opinion quite absurdly.

Dick's likings, Dick's aversions, Dick's friends, and Dick's fancies, are the main topic of their conversation.

They are glad that her dress is white. Dick likes white.

How pretty her locket is ! Dick likes pearls.

Bother Dick !

It is getting late now, and the carriage has been gone to the station over an hour.

Out comes Lord Wyatt, and looks from the window.

"Dick ought to be here."

Five minutes pass. Out toddles Lady Wyatt.

"Dick ought to be here."

Up comes the butler.

"Mr Wyatt should be here, my lord."

"Here he is !" cries my lord, and rushes to the hall door.

Nan rises involuntarily.

"Oh, he will come to us," observes Edith, drawing up her long neck, and looking quite shy.

Detty glances at herself in the mirror, and tucks in a stray lock of hair.

Voices are heard in the anteroom, and steps drawing nearer.

Lady Wyatt rustles forward and clasps to her bosom a breadth of smoked shooting-cloth, exclaiming, "My dearest Dick !"

"I'm wet, mother ; take care."

Dick is cool, but kind.

"Wet, my dear boy ? So you are. How did you get wet in the carriage ?"

"I came outside. There has been a shower."

Then Dick comes up to the girls, who are de-

murely kissed by him, and finally he says to his cousin, "How do you do?" in a polite, quiet voice.

Nan is surprised, pleased, and disappointed all at once.

This is no hero, to be sure; no elegant, accomplished, travelled, soul-charming youth, such as she had been led to expect; but, on the other hand, there is nothing of the sneering, despising, haw-haw deity about her cousin.

"So this is Dick," she reflects. "What an ugly fellow!"

Dick's hair is a coarse rusty black, cut close to his head. He has a red rough skin, a burnt neck, no particular eyes, and a nose that has run off the rails altogether.

But, on the other hand, he has a good, set, determined mouth, and the sweetest smile ever seen.

When Mr Burnand comes, Nan sees a really handsome man, but they have not been two days in the house before she discovers that she likes ugly faces best.

What is there about Dick that makes people like him?

He seldom comes near his sisters, who are stiff and stupid in his presence, and adore him from afar.

Yet when he does come—ah, well, it is the old thing over again with our poor little Nan.

Edith drives her in the pony-carriage; but the

thoughts of both are elsewhere. She and Detty play croquet, and Detty wins every game.

Then there is this Augusta.

Miss Bushe is, as Edith said, a very fine lady, but Nan declines to be put down by her, for all that; and what is more, Augusta in her secret heart is jealous of the bright, popular, merry-hearted girl.

All Nan's regrets, and remembrances of Queen's Gate, are blotted out now.

The present week, day, hour, is everything. Laura Church's letter, with the long accounts of gaieties for which Nan had begged, and which it had really cost an effort of good-nature to write—that very letter lies half read in her drawer. Some day she will wade through it,—not now.

Dick was talking to her when the post came in, and the letter drove him away, you see. She has a spite against it.

Not a word, look, nor outward sign of mischief done, does the tough little creature give. Disgraced she may be in her own eyes, but it is something to know that she is unsuspected. Her secret is her own. Hide it, cover it up, bury it well, little girl; other hearts than yours have done the like in their day.

Dick is not behaving well, however. It is not for nothing that those grey wistful eyes watch the empty chairs at the breakfast or the luncheon table.

Several times he has gone over to sit beside her, whether intentionally or not she cannot guess ; but they talk together, all the time, and she is quite at her ease with him.

This says nothing, of course ; but Dick has no need to follow them out afterwards, and walk up and down with his cousin, till he makes her late for their drive, and draws forth a remark on it from Augusta Bushe.

And then that delightful long Sunday evening, when he sat with them all in the recess talking over old times, and retailing childish stories, which Edith and Detty had forgotten. He is by Nan's side, so perhaps that is why he speaks principally to her. Next morning he goes away to the other end of the breakfast-table, and never utters a word.

To his own friends he is devoted. They go about together all day long, four neutral-tinted figures.

Now and then little Lord Hefton condescends to lie on the croquet-ground in the heat of the day, and Pax Burnand contrives to slip in to the school-room tea afterwards ; but Dick, if he comes at all, takes his cup standing, and then goes off, perchance to romp with his little sisters.

He does this one day at least, and it is on the only day that Nan had been let off. She is very good to the little ones, who torment her sadly, and all unconsciously. For who so good as Nan at all

their games, and who can tell them wild and wonderful tales like hers? That very morning, she had spent an hour in blowing paper ladies across the table for Flo. Dick had come in, and for a few seconds she fondly hoped he meant to stay; but he only looked, laughed, and lounged out again.

Then what follows this very evening?

He comes out to Nan, who is sitting lonely and forlorn in the recess, brings his photograph book, and shows her the whole collection.

Nan finds them charming, and Dick is pleased to explain to such an enthusiastic listener. He has some more up-stairs, and goes in search of them.

While he is away, Augusta comes out.

Of course, Miss Bushe would like to see the beautiful photographs. Mr Wyatt accordingly hands her the book they have just gone through, and proceeds to show Nan the new ones.

This is too much, and not at all what the intruder bargained for.

She looks at two, and flounces back into the drawing-room.

It gets too dark to see, so Dick promises to keep the rest for to-morrow. He and Nan are talking together, with one lying on her lap.

By-and-by the drawing-room door opens, and a shower of people emerge. They are going out of doors to get cool. "But we shan't interrupt you," observes a voice, whose sweet accents cover a sting.

Miss Bushe always speaks most mellifluously when she has something disagreeable to say.

She passes on with the rest in search of shawls, and Nan rises to follow.

"You don't need one," says Dick, "come out this way;" and he opens the side door, and Nan finds herself walking off alone with him.

They only went along the river path, you know, and came back by the cedars; they had no idea where the others had gone, how should they have?

It is too bad of Dick.

All that night the child thinks or dreams of him. She cannot forget the look he gave her for "Good-night," nor help wondering if it meant anything like Edith's audible murmur, "How pretty Nan looks to-night."

Tossing up and down, over and over, in the short, light, midsummer night that follows, these words ding-dong in her ears.

She does not wonder at the sisters now, for what Dick thinks is still more to her than to them.

Recklessly she puts on her best dresses, anxiously she stares in the glass.

Nothing much to boast of, the morning after that dusky ramble. Large bright eyes, and cheeks burning with a feverish flush,—these are what she sees, but what of that? They cannot betray her; and very, very quietly the slight graceful figure glides

in, and very, very circumspect is Nan in her questions and answers that morning.

It is one of the hottest days in the year, and she is in white, with a rose in her bosom.

Dick looks at it, walks over, and sits down beside her.

It is so hot that the expedition to the ruins has been nearly given up, and would have been so, without doubt, if the Dents had not agreed to be there.

The Dents will drive, the Wyatts will row up the river.

Nan held her breath while the discussion was being held, she was so fearful lest Lady Wyatt should carry her point.

Lady Wyatt thinks the girls will tire themselves out, and that the picnic is a foolish affair.

But Nan thinks otherwise; and accordingly the extravagant little creature goes in her white frock, and gets it all dirty and trodden upon, and does not care in the least—or rather rejoices in her ruins—since Dick takes out his own breast-pin and fastens up the folds himself.

A fine hole that pin will make, but she is reckless.

It is a happy day.

Dick is lazy and refuses to row; so little Lord Hefton and the amphibiously accomplished Dallie, assisted by one of the nondescripts, and a gardener's lad, do the work.

Dick steers and lies back, asking Nan to hold her parasol over his sunburned face. "The sun," he says, "is in his eyes."

Nan allows him all she can, but is a little anxious about freckles herself. Miss Bushe volunteers the shelter of her large sunshade.

"No, thanks," says Dick; "this will do."

Pax Burnand has gone off in the small boat with the eldest Miss Wyatt; and from the schoolroom window Miss Blisset watched their departure, communing with herself as to all it would lead to. Edith fills her thoughts; she has no eyes for Nan; and well for Nan that she has not.

In the big boat they are very merry.

Augusta favours them with her celebrated river song, to which Mr Dallie throws in a neat second.

It sounds charming on the water, as music always does, and Miss Bushe is much applauded. At the close she addresses her neighbour, politely, "Don't you sing at all, Miss Church?"

Nan starts, and blushes furiously. Where have her thoughts been wandering? Dick looks at her, and smiles. He has got into a way of looking at Nan and smiling, lately. Perhaps he is beginning to like her.

"Pray, Miss Bushe, give us another," implores little Hefton; "that last one was so awfully jolly!" *N.B.*—He takes the opportunity of letting his oar dip impotently in the water in exact time with the rest.

Dallie continues to sing and row lustily.

He is determined not to seem as if, when singing, he is unable to row, or when rowing, he cannot sing. Little Heston, behind his back, is grinning from ear to ear; while Dick pulls the strings, and keeps the boat even, conniving at his iniquity without a twinge of conscience.

When they land, Dallie is rather puffed; but, true to himself, he is the first to jump ashore, and has a hand for every lady and a caution for every pretty one.

"Don't get out yet, Nan," says Dick. "I'll take you over for those forget-me-nots while they are getting luncheon."

So he takes her over among the little creeks and islets which crowd the opposite bank; and the Dents, who have been on the spot for some time, and are busily making preparations, are a little disgusted at the coolness of Mr Wyatt.

It had been alleged that Dick had come down for their ball on the morrow,—that ball of which Edith had told her cousin.

Dick is not a ball-going man, and the Dents had taken it as a compliment.

Who is that with him in the boat? And is she coming to the ball?

Yes, Edith assures them of that. Their cousin has the offer of an escort back to Westmoreland on Friday, but she is to be at the ball.

Miss Dent would as soon that the escort had been for Thursday. The two voices on the river sound pleasantly together.

Are they never coming back?

Luncheon is waiting, and Dallie volunteers to roar a summons, putting his hands together as a trumpet.

He does it once, twice, thrice, thinking he never had such difficulty in making people hear in his life. They are at no distance to speak of, yet he has to use the whole power of his lungs before they give any sign of attention whatever.

A happy thought strikes little Hefton.

Just as Nan is stepping off the ledge into the boat, a large stone splashes into the water a couple of yards from her.

"Oh, I say!" ejaculates Hefton, catching his breath, "that was *rather* a close shave!"

Nan is easily startled. She loses her balance, and would infallibly fall into the water if Dick had not hold of her hand.

He hauls her ungracefully into the boat, and then turns upon his friend, black with wrath.

Nan says not a word, but looks pale, and as Dick catches sight of her face, he stops short in his scolding, and bends over her. "You were not frightened, Nan?"

"Oh, no."

"It was one of that Hefton's baby tricks. He is

the greatest fool!" explains Dick, who in his heart loves Hefton a thousand times more than Pax Burnand, Dallie, or any one of his other mates, whatever his sisters may say.

"Awfully sorry!" in a violent halloo from the other side.

"Ought to be." Low growl in the boat. .

Hefton is at the landing-place to help Nan out. He had no need to be there, considers the oarsman, and accordingly Dick turns the boat up the stream, and keeps him marching by the side for a couple of hundred yards. Nan's blue forget-me-nots drip on her white frock, and she knows it is bunched up behind with Dick's breast-pin in a most inelegant fashion, but she is quite happy.

At luncheon she sits a little in the background.

Dick is obliged to take the host's part, and unwillingly exerts himself, so far as to order Dallie hither and thither, to wonder at Burnand, and scoff at Hefton. Dallie flies round the circle, proud and glad to be the universal slave. Not a single thing will he touch, till all have fared sumptuously, and no one thinks of offering him a seat.

Little Hefton sits down upon a tray of glasses, and Dick's grave face explodes in a huge laugh.

There is a great drawing of corks, and changing of plates, and clatter and fuss, and no one notices that two or three of the party are very quiet.

"We hardly expected to see you at our ball,

Richard," says old Mrs Dent, shining with good-nature and champagne. "We feel honoured."

Dick hands her cake.

"You never were a dancer, we know," says she.

Nan's face falls. Not dance with Dick! Then she might just as well be back in Westmoreland,—at any rate, be as well away from the ball.

Dick tacitly acquiesces.

"You don't want dancers, Mrs Dent."

"We shall be glad to see you, at all events."

"Thanks."

"We have been in such trouble about the tent," Miss Dent privately informs the girls. "It gave way twice, and we did not dare to let mamma know. If any of you are nervous people, you had better not go into it."

None of them are nervous, but nevertheless there is an inquiry as to where the dancing is to be?

"In the saloon. We thought it best, you know, in case of accidents. Supper will be in the tent, now; and we have got mamma to let it be open at eleven, as it will be such a charming place for people to go out and in, and get cool in between the dances. Papa has had lights hung in the shrubbery, so you can meander there as much as you like, my dear." This aside to Edith.

"Mr Wyatt," says Augusta, softly, "*would* you mind giving me out my shawl? I think the grass *may* be a little damp."

The ground is as hard as a flint ; but what then ? One must have some excuse.

Dick spreads the shawl.

"And now sit down for a minute yourself, and tell me about your mother," suggests Mrs Dent, good-naturedly, fanning herself. "Here, between Miss Bushe and me. We will take care of you."

Dick sits down.

What is to be done next ? He hates this sort of thing. He has no idea what is expected of him. So follows a quarter of an hour's dreary conversation, questions and answers.

Little Hefton has lit his cigar and moved off. Dick looks, longs, and bolts after him.

Burnand, Dallie, and young Dent entertain the girls, and Nan's blue forget-me-nots fade and droop in her lap.

Young Dent attaches himself to the second Miss Wyatt—for he is still at Oxford, and must have somebody. He has a great deal to say about Walter, and is very full of cricket and Scotland, whither he is going to read and fish in the autumn.

He assures them all repeatedly that Walter will be down for the ball—an interesting fact, no doubt, but easily apprehended. Walter loves balls as much as his brother hates them.

There are fellows coming with him, too, Edwin says, and he describes the fellows at some length,

evidently feeling that the ball has been got up specially for their edification.

Edith is very gushing, and is sure that everybody will enjoy themselves immensely. Detty thinks Edwin Dent improved, and responds merrily to his rattle ; but poor Augusta and Georgie Dent, both rather forlorn and cross, have only each other to fall back upon, when the brisk Dallie has departed to overlook arrangements.

Augusta admires the other young lady's costume ; and what is Georgie going to wear at the ball ?

"Pink."

"Oh, pink ! Anything else ?"

"Well, half-a-dozen shades, but still all pink."

"And you look so well in pink !" cries Miss Bushe.

"*You* do, at all events, dear. What do you wear ?"

"Really, I hardly know. I have several pretty things. Elise sent me a lovely combination last week ; but it is almost too fine for me, with my simple tastes. I can't bear to be over-dressed."

"Oh, do wear it—there's a good girl. I don't believe it is a bit too fine. Make yourself as charming as you can ; I like to see people look nice."

Then Miss Dent draws closer. "Who is that girl with the Wyatts ?"

"Hush ! Take care ! A cousin."

"On which side ?"

"Mother—Lord Wyatt's sister."

"Oh!"

A pause.

"Does she often come here? I never met her before."

"No. This is her first appearance." (Lower.)

"A nasty little thing!"

Uproarious mirth from Edwin and Detty.

They have got foxgloves, and are cracking them for each other, telling their fortunes.

Pax Burnand goes over to Edith with a stalk, but nobody thinks of telling Nan's, though she is sitting silent, with her heart aching to know it.

At length the day grows cooler, and the recreants return.

Georgie Dent and Augusta are not quite such friends as before.

There are anxious thoughts in the breasts of several about the manner of their return home; for the Dents have brought their barouche, and as their homeward road passes Wyatt Hall, it is agreed that the two parties shall intermingle, and some who drove before will return in the boat.

Who, then, are to fill their places?

The elders are already seating themselves within the ample comfortable front seat, Mrs Dent taking more than her share, Lady Bushe less.

Sir John offers the opposite side all round, and finally gets in himself.

A small Dent is sadly forced in beside him. The

poor child had come in the dickey behind with Edwin, but no such luck is in store for her going back.

Edwin is off to the river, and two of the Wyatt satellites have filled the dickey.

No, one has dismounted again, preferring the seat beside the coachman ; for there is more room there, and he is fat.

There is still a seat to dispose of.

"Any of you like to drive?" It is Dick who is speaking.

A wretched silence.

"Perhaps Miss Church——" It is Augusta Bushe who looks round with the proposal.

Nan's grey eyes flash.

Yes, she will go. She steps hurriedly forward.

Oh, dear ! How she had been looking forward to that homeward row all through the long afternoon !

"You don't like it," says Dick.

"Oh, I don't mind. I can go very well."

"There is no need. All right, Parker. There's lots of room in the boat."

"Oh, we are not all going in that one boat!" screams Miss Georgie.

"Dear me ! *I* should have gone if I had thought no one else wished it," announces Augusta.

"You don't mean to say that you are going to pack us all into that one boat!" from one of the old gentlemen.

"What a lark!" from Edwin.

Nan forms a swift resolution.

"I am going to walk," she says. "It is only four miles by the lanes, and I have often walked farther than that at home."

Everybody stares.

"A good idea," says Dick. "Some of us can walk, at anyrate. Come along, Eddy."

But Eddy positively declines to come along. He is not out on a holiday for that. His flirtation with Detty is in full tide, and he has no idea of having it cut short in this way.

Besides, the fuller the boat, the better the fun. They will be hours getting home.

Dick argues with him, and sneers at him; but has to give it up, and try Hefton.

Hefton would come, but has hurt his foot. Would really like the walk, &c. &c., but clearly does not intend to take it.

Every one knows that Hefton is the laziest little creature under the sun, so no one thinks of being angry with him.

Nan desperately appeals to the old gentleman who had expressed disapproval of their all being packed into one boat.

She feels as if, somehow or other, all this commotion is owing to some fault of hers. Augusta looks as if *she* thought so, certainly.

The old gentleman is quite a friend of Nan's.

He was one of those in the house when she came, and she has often preferred talking with him to strangers; sometimes she has even, innocently enough, made a cat's paw of him. Surely he will stand her friend now. He is a retired Colonel of the Line, and she thinks ought to be able to march if he can do anything. Nan, you see, is not learned.

Will he walk with her?

The Colonel brightens up, and thinks he would rather like it.

Every one brightens, and Augusta looks almost gracious.

Dick puts the strings into Miss Dent's hands, who cheerfully accepts them. She presumes he will row.

But what is this? They are off, and he is not in?

"Are you not coming?" cries Heston, with a rueful visage. He is in front of Dallie now, and has no chance of a holiday, unless Dick is there to take his oar.

"I am going to walk," says Dick.

The boat is off, and he walks after Nan and the Colonel.

Nan and the Colonel are out of sight of the river before they know that they have a follower.

Nan is too proud to look back. She pictures the party gaily floating off, Augusta, perchance, in *her* old place, Dick comfortable, indifferent, and thinking no more of her? Why should she think of him?

Accordingly she is laughing and talking merrily

to the Colonel, as long as the boat is in sight, and to all appearance they are making game of the weary trudge before them. There is no sign of flagging courage in either. Suddenly comes "Halloo!" from behind, the river party being well out of sight.

There is Dick, walking rather fast, but cool as ever.

The dear old Colonel! He instantly proposes waiting for him, while his little companion says not a word; but her eyes are shining, and the walk has changed its whole aspect.

Dick comes up on her other side, while the Colonel apologises for their hasty departure. "We had no idea you were coming, my dear fellow."

Dick takes the forget-me-nots out of his cousin's hand, and expresses approval of her conduct.

"It was a brave idea, Nan. After all, the walk will be far pleasanter. They are a noisy set."

"I like to see a young lady step out like that!" observes the Colonel, energetically. "What is to become of our girls I, for one, cannot imagine. They never do anything but drive, drive, drive, or dance, dance, dance; then when the ice comes they wonder how a single day's skating knocks them up. There's nothing like walking for health, happiness, and—beauty," says the old gentleman, with old-fashioned straightforwardness, and a glance at the colour in the fair maid's cheeks beside him.

Dick looks round too, and smiles, trying to catch her eye ; but Nan gazes fixedly along the lane, and so he has to speak to her, ere she will turn her head.

“What do you think about it, Nan?”

“Oh, nothing. I—I don’t know many girls,” replies she. “Look, there they are! There they are, in the boat. How pretty it looks at that distance!”

“A great deal prettier in the distance than near at hand,” observes the old gentleman, with cheerful malice ; and perhaps the others agree in their hearts.

What a delightful old gentleman he is, to be sure! He always does the very thing he is wanted to do, and never makes an ill-timed suggestion.

Dick sees honeysuckle in the hedges, and they wait whilst he tears it down.

He finds a robin’s nest. Finally he remembers that there are strawberries on a bank close by, and Nan must come and get some.

The Colonel thinks he will sit quietly on the stile till they return: There is no hurry. Oh, dear no! It is quite early.

In consequence the pair are away fully half-an-hour, and all the largest berries have been saved for him.

They will be late for dinner, of course.

One does not post along the roads in pleasant

company; nor can people be expected to be home to a minute who go poking about banks for strawberries, and have to sit down and rest by the way-side every now and then.

Dick insists upon these rests. He is in high feather, and talks so much and so well that Nan wonders how she ever thought him silent.

The old gentleman listens and laughs good-humouredly. Very likely, innocent as he looks, he has a suspicion that he is playing gooseberry; there is no trusting these mild, absent people, they are often very wide awake indeed, and if you happen to notice one of them plunged in the deepest abstraction, and happen at the same time to be desirous of saying or doing some of your own business unobserved, let me give you this hint—*Don't*.

But Dick and Nan are not thinking of this.

Dick sits at his cousin's feet and examines the hole he has made in her dress; for the folds have given way, and altogether it has come to a sad end.

Shall he fasten it up again? She thinks not. He informs her that it will need to go to the wash, with other general hints. Nan tells him pleasantly that he knows nothing about it.

Whither are all her fears of Dick flown? She finds herself talking to him as if she had known him all her life.

And he is listening to her, too, earnestly, and with a strange gravity upon his face, for she is

telling them all about her life,—her curious simple life in the old manor-house among the hills.

Only her old grandmother with her ! And Granny is eighty-five ! What then ? Yet Nan prattles on as sweetly and fearlessly as a child.

Dick does not care to move—is careless about dinner.

Thinks they have done eating enough for one day.

Is it not only now beginning to get bearable out-of-doors ?

This picnic was the maddest escapade that ever was, and they really can't be expected to cut short the only pleasant part of it.

Part of this is for his two acquiescing partners ; part, with more in the same strain, is issued at the head of the unoffending Detty, who, arrayed for the evening, crosses the hall as the trio trudgo in.

Detty has said nothing to call forth such a tirade. She is gentle and smiling as ever, and only pauses to assure them that they may yet be in moderate time, as dinner has been postponed.

“We were so late ourselves, and then we could not get the Dents off. Are you not very tired, Nan dear ? It was so good of you to think of it ; and as for that Augusta, the way she went on coming home——” Drawing-room door opens. “Be quick !—there's a good girl.” Exit Detty.

Nan comes down towards the middle of dinner, and finds herself far away from Dick.

The kind hostess calls down the table to reproach her for foolhardiness, while a special glass of wine is despatched immediately.

Every one asks if she is tired.

She does not look tired, but sits very still ; talking to any one but Dick is an effort.

Her limbs ache, too, and the soft dining-room chair yields a delicious sense of repose.

She cannot go out with the others after dinner, yet dares not inhabit the recess by herself. So she takes a stool inside the bow-window, which is open down to the ground, and by-and-by four black figures jump out of a far-off casement, and come along the terrace.

They are all lighting cigars.

Ilepton proposes the shrubbery, but Dick has had enough walking, or says so, and seats himself outside Nan's window-sill.

Happy, hoped-for moment !

He is not now in a talking vein, and neither is she.

Assured of her not disliking it, he puffs away, leaning his head against the stone mullion, and looking down on the little figure inside.

She rests her cheek on her hand, doing nothing, and Dick thinks her a perfect picture of repose.

Presently comes his mother's voice, making his picture start, and turn her head.

"Nan, my dear, are you inclined to give us a little music?"

"Don't go," says Dick.

"I cannot refuse."

"Get some of the others to-night, mother. Nan has had a tremendous walk."

"My *dear* child, I had *quite* forgotten. Of course you must not *think* of moving. Poor dear! Can you not find a more comfortable chair? Come, lie down on this sofa. No one will notice. Poor thing!"

Nan moves irresolutely.

It is hard on her, but she must, unless she would have it thought—have it suspected—what she would not for worlds and worlds.

Dick saves her again.

"How can you sit stuffing in that hot room, mother? It ought to make you faint. Nan had much better stay where she is. Don't you go, Nan. You'll hear the nightingales directly."

Nan never hears nightingales in the north. Perhaps her pleasure in them is a little enhanced by circumstances in the present instance, but it must be genuine, for immediately the others come up, Detty accosts her with "Oh, Nan, I am so glad you are here! I was afraid you were missing the nightingales. If you *can* come down to the wood you will see glow-worms too. They are just beginning to peep out. Don't come if you would rather not."

"Oh yes, come," says Dick. Apparently he does not object to her moving now.

The others are all standing round upon the terrace, and Miss Bushe looks sarcastic.

"I suppose Miss Church is not tired *now*," says she. Softly as the words are spoken, Miss Church understands. Her conscience is not clear. She falters. "Perhaps to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night we shall all be dancing, my dear; but never mind, you look far too comfortable to stir."

This from Detty. Nan says no more, afraid alike of friend and foe.

The girls sit down, and the two new-comers who have spared one day from town for the country gaiety are very lively.

They arrived a few hours ago, and find the country superlatively charming — for the day. Nevertheless they work hard in their endeavours to induce Edie and Detty Wyatt to quit it. There are still a few weeks of the season remaining, why should they not run up for that time?

Miss Bushe combats the idea. Why *should* they? For her part she is tired of the racket and flurry of London life, and finds a rational existence much more to her mind.

The Ladies Ann and Harriet stare. Such sentiments from Augusta Bushe are something new. Of Edith they quite approve. Mr Burnand is undoubt-

edly a good *parti*. Miss Church is an elegant girl, and they rather admire her yellow-red hair.

Altogether, it is refreshing to be among a new set of people, and a good night's rest is what they have not had since Easter.

Will Nan have a good night's rest?

Dick took her to see the glow-worms after all; and this was how he did it.

Augusta goes to sing, and the other young ladies are delicate; so Edith escorts them indoors, and suddenly Dick slips off his seat.

"Come, Detty, I'll take you and Nan down to the bridge now."

Detty is charmed to be asked by her brother. Nan deliberates. Dick looks at her, and smiles in that way of his. She rises, and he draws her through the window. When Augusta has finished her song, she finds that her audience is sadly diminished.

Nan comes in with a flushed face and shining eyes. Glow-worms? Oh yes, plenty. There is no dew fallen and their feet are quite dry.

Lady Wyatt orders them all off to bed. Everybody is to sleep as long as they can, and be as fresh as possible for the ball.

The Ladies Ann and Harriet are faintly amused. Ball after ball they go to, as regularly as the nights come round, and such precautions are strange in their eyes.

Dick is talking of billiards ; Dallie has flown to light everybody's candle ; and Pax Burnand is making himself agreeable to Edith's papa.

Soon the house is quiet, and Nan could wish that the nightingales were silent too.

She must sleep with open windows ; and through them the loud, melodious, juggling trill comes almost too continuously. Her blue forget-me-nots are in water on the wash-hand-stand, a piece of honey-suckle crammed in beside them. It was this Dick gave her, when he said that about his afternoon's amusement which is not worth repeating.

The night grows hotter instead of cooler. A low growl is heard in the distance. A swift flash sweeps into the room.

Nan, in an agony of terror, rushes along the passage to be beside her cousins ; and the three huddle together in one bed, hiding their faces, and scarce uttering a syllable, while the thunderstorm rages overhead.

Presently comes their father's voice at the door, a ghostly sound. "Are you all right, girls?"

"Yes, papa."

"Go in and see what your cousin is about, then : I cannot make her hear."

Laughter from within. "She is here, papa. We are all here. Is it going off?"

"Going off? Oh dear, yes ! The last was fully ten miles distant. Good-night. Your mother wanted to

be sure that you were all safe and sound. I have been round the rooms."

Their fears abated, grumbles begin. The grass will be wet for the next evening, wet for the ball. Detty was wakened from her first good sleep. Nan is sure she will not sleep all night.

A gentle patter succeeds the rush of rain on the window-panes, and Nan at length departs, shuts her own window, and congratulates herself that at all events those dreadful birds are silent at last. The room is cool, bed is comfortable, she says a little prayer, and slumbers off, waking to wonder how it had been possible for her to sleep so soundly and so long.

This day is Nan's last at Wyatt Hall. Queen's Gate has faded into the dimmest and most insipid of backgrounds, and the old life in Westmoreland is gone for ever. One way or other, all will be changed for her when she returns thither.

The cousins cease not to lament her going. Miss Bushe is very cold and disdainful, and sweeps past in her dainty millinery with the slightest possible "Good morning."

Augusta is looking very well in a fresh mauve muslin, while poor extravagant Nan has exhausted her last respectable dress, and is reduced to a shabby makeshift.

She heeds it not, but has her eyes on the floor, her ears in the doorway.

Dick is very late, and Burnand is absent too. It turns out that they went off to fish at six o'clock, and two hearts sink a little at this announcement. Girls don't understand this going to fish when things are coming to a crisis between them and their lovers. Edith sits by her cousin, and both are thinking the same thoughts.

They go out together on the terrace afterwards, and sit facing the river.

Detty and Lady Ann, Augusta and Lady Harriet, come out in pairs. Horses and pony-carts are ordered, and the morning is got through somehow.

At luncheon the delinquents appear. Dick comes at once to his cousin, shows her his trophies, and leans on the back of her chair talking about them; he is going to sit down beside her when his mother despatches him to carve, and Nan thinks evil of Lady Wyatt in her heart.

So on throughout the unsatisfactory day.

It is wasted — absolutely, irrevocably wasted. Days of this sort are every one's experience. They are days of mistakes, blunders, stupidity.

What but a blunder was it on the part of good Lady Wyatt to order the men out of the way, in order that her girls might be brisk and sprightly for the ball? and what but stupidity was it on the part of the men to obey?

Nan begins to look forward almost wildly to the evening.

Carefully, anxiously, does she array herself before the mirror. Her dress is all that it should be this time, — be-puffed, be-flounced, be-flowered in the most approved style, yet pure, simple, and fresh as the fair wearer herself.

Detty pronounces her perfect ; hair, ornaments, everything.

Detty meanwhile is gaping at herself, as she is reflected by the great glass into a hand-glass, which she holds aloft with one arm.

“Detty, I’ve not got a single pair of clean gloves.”

“There is the box, take a dozen if you like. I always take care to have a clean pair in my pocket.”

“What size are they?”

No answer.

“These will do, thanks,” says Nan. “Does Dick——”

“A hair-pin, dear, don’t you see? A big, fat one. There! That! Thanks!”

“Do Dick and Walter——”

“Oh, look here, Nan! can you put this right? I felt sure there was something wrong; that woman never does do my hair as I like it. Shall I have to take down the whole side? Ah! that’s better. Thank you—yes, that will do. You see, Nan, I have to seize the moment when she goes out of the room——” Maid re-enters, and Nan never finds out what it was she came to discover about Dick and Walter.

Dick is reading in the drawing-room when the bevy of maidens rustle in. He looks up kindly, and Edith is emboldened to ask her brother if he likes their dresses; Burnand's eyes having already told his opinion.

"Much about the usual thing, aren't they, Edie?"

"Don't you think Nan's pretty?"

"Much about the same, isn't it, Nan?" says cruel Dick.

On this a goddess in clouds of azure gives Mr Wyatt an encouraging smile. "Balls and ball-dresses *are* so stupid!" says Miss Bushe, sympathisingly.

Nan's ball begins well.

Her cousins are pleased with her, and proud of her. If she had been blind, halt, or maimed, Edie and Detty would still have done their duty conscientiously; but nevertheless they are fully able to distinguish and appreciate the difference between distributing the glances of a bright-eyed favourite among eager applicants, and inflicting the hand of a soured and sorrowful dummy upon men who can hardly be persuaded to take it.

So, first, Edith leads up a fair man, and then Detty a dark one; and a little of the old Queen's Gate feeling comes over Nan as she whirls away among the dancers.

There is no crowd. The long lofty rooms would

hold nearly double the number assembled. The spring in the floor is delicious.

Nan's feet fly, and for the first half-hour she can think of nothing but the delight of dancing.

It is clear that Dick is not going to dance.

He is lounging in the doorway, in the midst of a bundle of black coats, little Hefton with him.

Pax Burnand is dancing again and again with Edith, and Mr Dallie is engaged to every girl in the room.

Nan's eyes begin to turn wistfully towards that doorway, but she has not much breathing-space, for she is in great request.

Must she accept every proposal? So she supposes, Aunt Eliza's teaching being that under no circumstances can a young lady refuse to dance, unless she intends sitting down all the evening.

This being the Queen's Gate creed, Nan acts up to it.

She remembers her cousin William's wrathful invectives, when he had been once, as he termed it, "thrown over," and would be loath to tempt any one to speak so of her.

Walter has danced twice with his cousin. He did not see Nan till she was in ball-attire, when he decided at once that she was pretty, but not equal by any means to Miss Bushe.

Walter is a neat youth, infinitely more of a lady's man than his brother. He thinks Dick is too much

of a swell, but consoles himself with the bad make of his brother's boots.

True to Edwin's prognostications, the fellows have also arrived, and some of them ask to be introduced to Miss Church. The red-haired girl with her ivory-like skin is one of the belles of the room.

She is a good dancer, too, and indefatigable ; but paler and paler grow Nan's cheeks.

At last she really cannot go on.

Dick has just passed into the supper-room with Georgie Dent on his arm ; and as they went by, Eddy and she were in their way. Eddy, who has been forsaken of late by Miss Henrietta, has in consequence transferred his affections ; and just as Dick was behind, he was passionately imploring his partner to go out of doors with him.

Seeing the impression she makes on the fellows increases, perhaps originally suggested Edwin's ardour.

He sticks to her. He declares, vows, and protests with unflagging earnestness that she is engaged to him.

He inveigles her into confidential seats, and detains her nearly half-an-hour at supper.

Bewildered Nan is no match for him. She is only conscious of her secret, and will work herself to death to hide it.

So she talks, and simpers, and would give anything to be rid of her tormentor. But it was too

much to have Dick overhear Edwin's folly. There he was, pressed against them in the doorway, quietly guiding his lady's steps, while that stupid, tiresome boy—oh, how could he do it?

Nan owns at last that she is tired.

She seats herself resolutely within the dancing-room, and as close as she can to the doorway; Dick coming in or out must not only see her, but be close beside her. She will know at least how much of this is of his seeking, how much is accidental.

Presently Edith comes floating along, and stops, panting gently, but still with not a dishevelled hair on that small, smooth head.

"Is it not delightful, Nan?"

"Very."

"Why are you not dancing?"

"I am tired, thank you."

"Tired already! I could go on all night."

"I suppose I must not expect one, then?" says Burnand, courteously. He has asked Nan before, but she was engaged. By his look she knows she may refuse him again without offending; so she does, and he is quite satisfied.

Dick is standing by the mantel-piece, spinning a top. Round him the men flock, as usual. Everybody wants to try. Loud laughter. The top falls off the shelf, rolls away among the dancers, and down come a couple. It is Miss Bushe and Captain Hackston, the biggest man in the room.

Augusta is greatly vexed : but Dick makes such abject apologies, and looks so vexed himself, as he really is, that she must perforce forgive him. Besides, she has taken note of Mr Wyatt's behaviour during the evening, and is quite relieved by it ; she had really almost begun to think, absurd as the idea was, that he was taken with that forward, flirting little creature.

So, on the ball goes. Tum-tum-tum, the ceaseless tunes succeed each other ; and with unwearied alacrity respond the swish, rustle, and whirl of flowing robes. Going on her rounds of civility, the kind hostess lights on Nan.

She recollects that this is a stranger, and thinks that she has exhausted her partners. She is alone at this time ; for Eddy, bemoaning his fate, has been compelled to leave her, to take part in what he terms a dreadful abominable duty-dance.

His going is an unutterable relief ; but still Nan is conscious that she looks rather forlorn.

However, now is her only hope. She is free at last, and Dick *may* come, for he is close at hand, speaking to no one.

She has hardly patience to answer the old lady civilly, so feverishly eager is she for that mass of black satin and lace to move out of the way.

The music has stopped, and the dancers are parading. Mrs Dent is forced aside. Now, Dick
---NOW !

He is looking at her. He has moved.

"Miss Church," in Georgina Dent's sweetest tones, "Captain Hackstone wishes to be introduced."

Miss Church mechanically rises, forgets to plead fatigue, forgets that she has just refused Mr Burnand and persistently put down Eddy Dent, is conscious only of a pair of stern grave eyes fixed upon her, and will not have Dick think she declines on his account. The moment has passed, and her hand is within Captain Hackstone's arm.

Oh, unkind Georgina ! And unkinder, unkindest Dick !

So she waltzes with Captain Hackstone, and trails through a weary lancers with old Sir John Bushe, who is under the impression all the time that it is a quadrille which has miscarried ; and it is getting far into the morning, and the ball is nearly over.

The flowers in her bosom are not more wan and woe-begone than she.

"Why, Nan, I thought all your London dissipation would have carried you through one country ball !" cries Detty, looking as bright as a lark.

"Is the carriage come, Detty ?"

"Papa and mamma went, you know, ages ago. The Bushes are just going now, and Edith with them. I rather think (laughing) that Mr Burnand is on the box. I asked particularly for you to stay, for I knew you could not be spared. We shall go

as soon as the carriage comes back. We have only one out to go home in, you know. What is it to be, Edwin?"

"Sir Roger. I say, Miss Detty, you have quite forsaken me ; let us have this together."

One more chance for Nan.

Dick can go through Sir Roger, and perhaps he will, with her ; at all events there will be one other quarter of an hour in which, hope against hope, something *may* turn up.

She looks all around. No Dick.

"Oh, there will be enough without me," to Walter.

"See if you cannot get some one else," to a member of the fraternity of fellows.

Where is Dick? The dance has begun. The first person who comes forward is her cousin, and then Nan sees that he is heading the dance with old Mrs Dent. She has gained nothing, and is the only person sitting down in the room.

The carriage is at the door ere they have done dancing, and Detty, radiant as ever, hurries her off to the cloak-room.

"Such fun, Nan ! Why, it is broad daylight ! I don't want to go home at all. Walter, go and find Augusta. Oh, here she is with Dick ! Mind you give us another ball soon, Eddy."

"Do come back to-morrow night, and let us have it over again," pleads Eddy, his head in at the

carriage-window. "I say, I wish you would. I'll come over and ask you."

"Are they both going outside?" inquires Detty, indicating her brothers.

"Here, Walter, you get in," suggests young Dent.

"Then where is Dallie?" inquires Walter.

"He sleeps here to-night, you know. Hefton went with the last lot, and so did that other one. I say, Walter, do stay and sleep on my sofa. Do, there's a good fellow."

Walter, however, is not tempted, and the carriage rolls off among the poppy-fields in the cool morning light.

Augusta and Detty prate without ceasing, while Walter keeps up a hum of bygone waltzes.

Augusta is much concerned that Miss Church did not seem to enjoy herself, she looked so overdone that every one noticed it. It was a pity she stayed so late; she supposed she was not accustomed to balls.

Miss Blisset woke out of her sleep by the third roll of wheels under her window, thinks how happy they all are, and almost wishes they would not talk about it, as she knows they will, the whole of that day and the next.

Hot soup follows the girls to their rooms. Nan and Augusta find Edith and Lady Ann still up, but Lady Ann is yawning, and takes her departure

almost immediately. She and her sister have had their own friends at the ball, and have been brought home by some of these. They protest that they have greatly enjoyed themselves, and are a thousand times more fatigued than they have been at any ball in town this season. One does dance so in the country, it is quite delightful.

Edith has had her soup, and there is no possible reason why she should not plait up her hair, and get into bed, but she prefers to sit dallying with her brushes, and looks as smiling and wide awake as possible.

"Well, madam," says her sister, lovingly, "I presume *you* have enjoyed yourself?"

So it appears. Edith has enjoyed herself immensely, hopes that Augusta has, and Nan likewise.

Of course they have, both of them. Nan takes down her hair, drawing off the little gossamer web of a net, and making a pile of frizettes, flowers, and hair-pins on the table.

They take their soup, and Augusta moves off smiling and serene.

Nan waits a few minutes longer, to see if the sisters have anything to say, any sort of indirect consolation to administer.

They have not; no thought of her and Dick has ever entered their minds.

"Good night, Edie."

"Good *morning*, Nan."

"Do get into bed now," says Detty, with authority. "Nan has to think of that horrid journey to-morrow. Nan, do go, there's a dear. She won't be quiet till you do, and you ought to think of yourself too," says Miss Detty, with unprecedented prudence.

Yes, Nan has her journey, and she knows that her trunk has to be packed besides.

Little would she have cared for that, if—ah, well! it is the last drop in her cup, now.

She gathers up her fan, gloves, and flowers, and departs. Softly going along the gallery her step makes no sound, and her fingers are on the door-handle of her own room.

Suddenly the opposite door opens—she looks round—there is Dick.

Not a sound in the great house save the tick-tick of the tall clock in the passage, loudly telling how the time wears on.

Dick is going to have a pipe. He has put on a rough smoking-coat, which contrasts oddly with his shining nether garments, and is hurrying off to join his friends, when he thus comes face to face with his cousin.

He stands still.

She stands still.

Must she, must she open the door, and when she shuts it after her, close also her last glimpse of hope? Yes, if Dick makes no sign.

She opens the door, Dick steps up hurriedly.
"May I keep you for a minute?"

Her arm falls by her side.

"Come into the schoolroom."

"Yes, wait a moment."

Into her chamber she steps, flings down the rubbish on the bed, passes a comb through her tails of twisted hair, and goes after him.

Dick is standing by the window, with his knee on the ledge, his hands in his pockets, and his forehead pressed against the panes.

The clock says half-past four, and the birds are in full chorus outside.

Ghostly looks the schoolroom at this hour. There is Miss Blisset's work-basket gaping open on the table, and the book with which she solaced her lonely evening. There is the piano, whose voice never ceases by day, closed, silent. There is the backboard on which some little figure reclines perpetually, empty, and tilted up against the wall. The very maps and globes have an air of undisturbed repose.

The books nestle tranquilly together on the shelves.

All sense of weariness has left Nan now.

She comes up to Dick in her crumpled ball-dress, with her flowing fleece of hair, and shining ornaments, a strange vision in this grim early light.

She is all in a tumult, but still she has an eye to see how nice *he* looks. One glance suffices to take him in from head to foot; no collar, the red burnt neck showing against the white shirt, the rough coat and the sleek black trousers; Dick never looked to greater advantage, while she—but no matter, he turns round and draws his knee off the ledge.

Then he offers her a seat, which she mutely disregards, and there is a pause, during which they eye each other awkwardly.

How on earth is he to begin? Nan has the best of it at the outset, and that is something. He has sought the interview, and speak he must. She is only there in compliance with his request. At last he makes the plunge.

“Nan, I want to ask you a question!”

“Yes?”

“What made you go on so, to-night?”

Go on so! Go on how? What does he mean? What has she done? After all, is there to be nothing but this? Has she been dreaming of a love-tale, and is she to have nothing but a lecture?

Mortifying, miserable thought! Wretched Nan! She strings herself up, and answers slowly and proudly, “I don’t know what you mean.”

“You don’t know. Oh! perhaps I should not have spoken. I thought you might, that was all,”

says Mr Wyatt, with freezing politeness. "I see I was mistaken."

No answer.

"I need not detain you then. Pray excuse me," says Dick, with his best bow.

An answering bow, a quiver of the lip, she sweeps away.

The room is blocked somehow, or Nan does not see clearly, and her dress is caught in a garden chair. It rends—she tears it off; it rends further but still holds on—she stoops her head, and Dick sees the tears running down her face.

In a moment he is by her side.

"I can't help it," sobs the poor child, struggling for breath and crimson with shame. "I am so—so tired. Let me go."

"You must not go yet," says Dick, in her ear. "Nan, don't you know that this is *everything* to me? I am no boy to be able to fall in and out of love every second day. Come here. Sit down. Dear," very softly, "you are not afraid of me?"

Afraid? No. But she is so ashamed, she is so weak, so helpless. Will she ever dare to look him in the face again?

Yet his arm is round her waist, and one of her little shoulders is pressed against his rough coat. She must master herself and explain if she can, or get away if she can't. Yet she can do nothing but

cry. The anxieties, heart-sinkings, turning-points of that most miserable night have been too much for her at last.

Dick attacks, questions, pets and coaxes, but she is dumb.

"You shan't get away now, I will not let you," says he, quietly. "You must say something, or I shall have to say it for you. Speak, Nan."

She lifts her face to speak, and Dick clasps the little lovely face to his bosom.

And what has it all been about then? Absolutely nothing.

He had spoken to her, and she had not heard, and she had danced though he had not asked her, or some such finely-drawn nonsense.

The right is on her side, and Nan knows it is, but she cannot claim it. There is a lump in her throat, so that she cannot utter a syllable.

And he looks at her, and a great sense of his love, and his triumph, and his happiness comes over him. Why, Dick, what a heart you have ! What hidden wells lie there, unknown and undreamed of ; simply because they have never been probed before !

Let them spring up fearlessly now, and unchecked ; the little north-country girl with the magic of her bright, loving, contented spirit has broken the spell. And she will be a happy woman, and you have won a treasure. God bless you both !

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Six hours later, and breakfast is going slowly on. One by one the stragglers have dropped in: Miss Blisset has begun her daily round two hours ago; and at last comes down Miss Nan Church, latest of all, and looking as demure as if she had been teaching a Sunday class the night before, and had had a bowl of bread-and-milk for supper after it.

She takes the vacant seat, and finds it is directly opposite Dick.

He says "Good-morning" in ceremonious accents, and then gives her a look over his coffee-cup that settles her for the time being.

Some one is asking about her train. Lady Wyatt remembers to offer her maid, and the Ladies Ann and Harriet will be charmed if Miss Church will accept their escort as far as they can travel together.

It is very perplexing.

Dick has laughed to scorn the idea of her going, and has assured her he will make it all straight; and now he goes unconcernedly on with his cold salmon, and she even sees a smile in his eyes, when she has to make her vague unsatisfactory answers.

No sooner, however, does the old Colonel, still her constant friend, quit Nan's side, than Dick rises, walks round the table, and seats himself in the vacant chair.

Can he have sent up that red rose she wears in her bosom? Can he now, as he turns towards

her, pretending to admire it, be speaking of something quite different, something known only to their two selves?

So it is ; he is telling Nan not to mind, it will be all over in half-an-hour ; and then he asks her to go and wait in the drawing-room, while he tells the governor.

He is going now ; and accordingly, he quits the room ; and Miss Bushe again experiences a sensation of relief. Mr Wyatt is nothing to her, of course ; but she would be sorry to see him entangled in any absurd way. As Miss Church goes away in the afternoon, she has no objection to take her own departure also, especially as they will meet the Wyatts next week at Preddingtram, and then who can tell what may happen?

Edith and Detty have so many departing guests to attend to, that Nan is able to escape from them better than she could have hoped, and the drawing-room is empty at this hour.

She seizes her opportunity and steals in thither, taking refuge among the music-books.

Of course her music is mislaid ; but what a wretchedly uncomfortable half-hour it is ! Everybody going in and out troubles her ; and what if any one should stay ! Oh ! why did Dick put her there ? And why is he so long in coming ?

Every minute is precious. She is shaking all over. And then the party of girls come along the

terrace, and stroll off towards the garden, and at last he comes.

A whisper, a pause, something else, and she goes off with him like a tame dove.

Well, of course it is all right. No one who knows Lord and Lady Wyatt would doubt that. Nan escapes at last, with half the life kissed and pressed out of her, and finds the maid raging up and down in her bedroom, and stuffing all her best garments maliciously into the bottom of the trunk, in revenge for having been kept waiting.

Miss Church must excuse her, my lady sent her there an hour ago, and she could not possibly tell what Miss Church would wish to have left out. She begs pardon, but there is so little time.

The woman is gently dismissed, Miss Church does not travel that day.

Nan takes her hat, and goes down just as she is, for Dick is waiting.

Passing out at the garden door, they meet the whole troop of men and maidens point-blank, and for once in his life Dick *does* blush.

Edith steps forward. "Nan, dear, you have been looking for us? We went down the long path to get some strawberries. Are you going? Mind you keep to the right, they are only ripe under the netting."

"All right—I'll take her," says Dick, in unmistakable accents, and no one dares to say a word.

They go off, away from the strawberry-bed, in view of the whole party, and then a smothered guffaw from little Hefton shows that the secret is out. He knows, of course.

Dick told him, the first thing in the morning, and it was he who took them all off to the garden, to leave the field clear for his friend.

"Well, Miss Wyatt?"

Edith looks as if she had seen a ghost.

"I really had no idea of that," whispers Lady Ann, charmingly interested. "You sly things, how well you have kept it to yourselves!"

Edith is not sure whether she has kept it or not, is unable to answer Lord Hefton, feels as if the ground were rising under her feet.

When she lifts her eyes at last, it is to find two other eyes fastened upon them.

For Pax Burnand has caught fire; and so, when Dick and Nan come back,—do not ask to know how soon that was,—they find that another pair have mated likewise; and poor Lord Wyatt never thinks of the day after a ball all the rest of his life, without a shudder.

Nobody responds to Eddy Dent's invitation, though the poor lad has ridden over in the heat of the day to give it.

They are far happier at home. When the last carriage with the Bushes in it rolls away from the door, every one feels relieved. Augusta is so odd

and tired. And does she always have a headache after a ball?

At any rate they are all now of one heart and one mind.

After dinner they have strawberries-and-cream on the lawn. Nan has had her sleep out in the afternoon, and has written her letter, and the whole house knows about it. Dick lies at her feet, and the nightingales are singing in the wood below.

THE BELLS OF BOTREAUUX.

A LEGEND.

[*MAGA.* JANUARY 1858.]

CHAPTER I.

THERE are spots and nooks in the world so wild and isolated, so set in contrast by oddness of position with the general order and economy, that they seem accidents, freaks, or afterthoughts of nature. Such is the little harbour of Boscastle, on the north coast of Cornwall. It was an afterthought. There the sea has made for itself an inlet betwixt the bold headlands of the rocky shore, where it tides, boils, and surges in a little cove, surrounded by dark walls of cliff and jutting points, expending its force against the small pier, which forms a confined and partial shelter for the few ships trading thither. A deep narrow valley, through which a tiny streamlet runs over a stony shelving bed, betwixt the sloping sides of grassy furze-clad steepes, leads inland to a few straggling

houses, scattered along the foot of the hills, and connected by a rude bridge. Here were the few stores, shops, and yards which the trade and traffic of the place required ; here were the houses of the wild seamen and fishers, who battled through life with the storms and surfs, the perils and difficulties of that rock-bound coast ; and here the rude quarrymen from a neighbouring district laid their heads, took their chance meals, their chance rests and recreations. Amid this hard-bred, hard-living, rough-tutored commonalty, moved a small and well-graduated aristocracy of craftsmen, shipwrights, clerks, and merchants. The houses were simple and commonplace enough, but the shadows of the overhanging hills, now dark with cloud-gloom, now rich and mellow with the bloom of furze and heath, and the distant roar of the surf and the glimpses of spray and foam, gave to the place a wild picturesqueness which toned well with the life of the people. At times, too, when the storms arose, when the waves surged loudly and heavily against the shore, and the winds swept up the valley with a drear and sullen boom, and the storm-shades fell darkly and wildly, the vale-head, with its cluster of homesteads, was raised into sublimity. How often does nature thus clothe the homeliness of man with its own beauty and grandeur ! how often, again, does man invest its commonplaces with a sacredness and a glory ! This spot was, however, but the

outskirt, the offset of the town, which lay strewn on the face of the hill in clumps and heaps of houses, massed like boulders or tors along the side of a steep and tortuous road, which led down towards the harbour.

On a Christmas Eve, some time in the beginning of this century—when men still wore their singularities and their individualism, and ere civilisation had reduced society to one Procrustean standard—a group of men were assembled in the skittle-alley of the village inn. It was a long thatched shed, open at the end and one side, and having benches all around for the spectators. It was a wild, strange group. There were the hard-lined, weather-beaten faces, and strong, stalwart, toil-hardened forms of pilots and fishermen, clad in the thick heavy boots, the large woollen frocks hanging in folds round their waists, and the fur cap or oilskin hat, which seems as peculiar to the class as his skin is to the bear; of quarrymen, heavy, dull, and clay-stained; and of sturdy, homely-looking yeomen. In the midst, with a sort of half-acknowledged authority and precedence, sat a large, stout, muscular man of herculean build, but whose giant proportions were confused and lost by his loose mode of sitting: the face was broad and ruddy, the brow wide and open. This was old John Truscott, a famous wrestler, who had not only carried off the hats, purses, and other prizes at the neighbouring games, but had actually

"gone foreign" to show his prowess—that is, had passed into the next county to meet the challenge of a man who claimed the championship of the kingdom; had there and then thrown him in a fair ring, winning the supremacy for his own county; and had come back to live and move among his own people, surrounded with a little halo of hero-worship.

Seldom were surnames heard in this assemblage. Men were known chiefly by patronymics, synonyms, and nicknames. "Smuggler Tom," "Pilot Joe," "Champion John," and "Fancy Sam," were the terms and titles bandied about from mouth to mouth. At the time we enter, the interest is all centred on two players. The one was a tall, lithe, sinewy man, quick, rapid, and impulsive in his action and gestures. The face was handsome, but its beauty was of the kind which bordered on the fearful. The features and expression were fine and strongly marked, but stern and unsoftened as though they had been impressed in lava, or burnt in by the heat of sun and passion. The eye was fierce and restless, and flashed ever and anon with furtive and vengeful glances. Around his brown brawny neck a coloured kerchief was wound loosely, and fastened in front by a gold ring; his jacket was full, and trimmed with braid; little filigree buttons held his waistcoat together; a cap, with hanging tassel and gold band, sat lightly on his short dark curls, and round his waist was bound a red sash.

The dress was foreign, and Richard Curgenvén, the wearer—or Brazilian Dick, as he was familiarly called—had been a wanderer in many lands, had shared (it was said) in some strange exploits on the Spanish Main; had worked in the mines of Brazil, and acted many another phase of wild and adventurous life. He was now come to his native land, well-to-do, it seemed; was liberal, even lavish of his means, and had a dash and recklessness in all he said and did, which was taking with the many, but had a strong repulsion for the staid stay-at-home natures of patriarchs and elders. The rival player was Phil Rounsval, a young yeoman, the descendant of yeomen who had lived on the same farm since the time of the Domesday Book without altering their landmarks, and had gone on man after man tilling the same acres, housing their cattle in the same steads, sitting by the same hearth-stone, and being borne to the same churchyard on the cliff, where the burial mounds of the race were heaped like molehills. He was young, and comely to look upon. The character of his countenance was one common to the Cornish—massive, yet finely turned—not heavy or inexpressive, but rarely lit or excited; his form was slouching or slovenly, until some gymnastic action threw it into an attitude of firm and graceful strength. The game was one of skill, and was at a turning-point. The men were “lobbing”—that is, throwing the

bowl home to the pins, not bowling or trundling it. Brazilian Dick had made some brilliant and dashing throws, which had somewhat posed the steady play of his antagonist. There were now three pins standing, and Farmer Phil had to bring down these in one throw. Slowly the bowl was poised, swiftly and surely it flew, just touching the bellying point of the outer pin, and bounding to the other two, laying all on the ground. The game was won. A little uproar of shouts, opinions, and acclaim closed around the players, and it was soon evident that the principals themselves were at high words.

"Let 'em fight it out!" was the general cry, and seemed the mutual meaning.

Presently old John Truscott's form was seen, and his voice heard in the midst. "No fighting—no fighting here!" he said. "If the lads want to know who is best man, let 'em try a turn of wrestling. A kindly grip and a faal don't leave the ill blood of a black eye or a bruise. I have knowed many fellows better friends after a good hearty tuzzle."

"A second Daniel come to judgment," was the thought, though not the speech, of the Cornishmen. The sentence was received with general assent. A ring was speedily formed—the men strip, and are all attired in the wrestling-jackets, always ready on such occasions; they shake hands, according to custom, though the wilful look of the eye,

dark and flashing with one, calm and steady with the other, belie the friendly grasp. Now they take their grip. To the uninitiated, the Brazilian has out and out the best of it. He works and turns and twists apparently according to his pleasure; but the *connoisseur* sees that his adversary is gradually drawing him closer and closer with the steady force of calm power. They are close now, breast to breast, and Phil's right arm is thrown over the shoulder, his right leg twined round that of the Brazilian, who perforce seizes him now round the waist. "A hitch, a hitch," is the shout. "He hath got 'un now," mutters old John Truscott.

For a minute they stand thus, still and statuesque, either afraid to lose his balance. Phil makes play; fails; rescues himself; grows wary. The Brazilian loses patience; makes a sudden effort; fails. A sudden touch of Phil's heel, a quick turn of the whole body, and down goes his adversary fairly on his back, not heavily, but with the elastic bound of an india-rubber ball.

"A faal—a faal!" is the cry.

The men rise and glare at each other, and words are muttered such as these—"Next time we will have a sharper tuzzle."—"Ay, ay, and perhaps thee may then have a heavier fall."

There is a general breaking up and dispersion to the different homes now for the Christmas Eve.

"There is ill blood atween those lads," says

old Joe Treherne the pilot; "and 'tis all along of old miller Rosevear's lass."

"Ah!" says old Truscott, "there's a lass in the case, is there? I misdoubted somewhat, Farmer Phil played so wilful."

"Yes, sure," rejoined the pilot, "he cremed 'un cruel hard, and looked so vengeful at one time, that I thought he was going to give 'un the Flying Mare."

"I am glad he didn't—glad he didn't."

"Why, John! you know none but the best men can play that hitch."

"None but the best men can play it, and the best men never do it except when the blood is up. I never played it but once, and I am sorrow for it now—always have been."

"Tell us all about it, Champion Jan," was the cry of many voices.

"Well; you know, lads, how I went up to Plymouth to wrastle the Devonshire champion. He were a good man—as good a man as e'er I had a turn with. Well, he kicked and kicked me cruel, till my leg was all black and plummed up, from knee to ankle. But I didn't mind this much, for I gave 'un a creme (a grip) for every kick; and at last he put forth his foot vengefully, and took my toe-nail clean off. I was in cruel pain—very nigh mad, and I closed in on 'un, took the old hitch, gave 'un the hoist, and away he went flying over

my shoulder, and fell flat on the ground like a sack of wheat."

"Didst kill 'un, Jan?—didst break his bones?"

"No, no; he wasn't that hurt. The wind was out of 'un for a while; but he was game, regular game, and got up and stood another turn; but I have heard that he was never his own man again. No, no, lads, never play in passion—never give the Flying Mare."

"Except when your toe-nail's kicked off," insinuates pilot Joe.

Old Truscott answered not, but went his way, shaking his head, thinking and feeling evidently that that angry action was a blot on his manhood, and had placed a withered leaf in his champion's chaplet.

CHAPTER II.

Deep in one of those glens which everywhere in Cornwall vein the land with lines of beauty and sublimity, coursing through and vivifying even bleakness and barrenness with touches of the picturesque and romantic, stood an old mill. Built in a hollow of the rock, it seemed almost a projection of it, save where the fitful lights of a wintry sky struck out dimly and partially the outline of its thick thatched roof with its heavy overhanging eaves, its broad gable with latticed

windows, doors, and hatches, and the huge wheel resting like a black jagged shadow in the darkness. In front brawled a tiny brook, which had no right, from its size, to make the noise it did. It was almost the only thing which woke up or enlivened the solitudes and wastes through which it passed. It made the life of the little glen as it tumbled, and foamed, and gurgled in its rocky course, fretting in eddies over the loose stones, lying darkly in deep pools, from which it swept over ridges and ledges in tiny cascades—rushing through channels it had worn for itself—running in a wavy line through a dark tunnel of cliff—and then, at last, sparkling and dancing in the open space, where it met the breakers of the great sea. It was ever alight, too, even in the dark places, with sun or moon gleams; and, by day or night, its waters glanced and shone like bright spots in the gloom and shadows of the glen.

This spot was called the Rocky Valley, and was a short distance only from the town of Boscastle. Here lived old Hugh Rosevear the miller. He and his mill were both at rest now, keeping holiday. He was the picture of holiday rest as he sat in a huge oaken settle before the fire—the very type of a jolly miller. Why millers should necessarily be jolly, or why their vocation should nurture this characteristic, is not very clear, save that the plenty which passes by them sheds on their nature

a reflection of goodliness and satisfaction. We have seen millers certainly, meagre, sombre, and dismal enough to have done honour to a conventicle; but these are the failures: as a class, they are generally fat and well-liking, mirthful and chirping, fond of jest, and feast, and song.

Old Hugh looked like a man who was about to feast, and who liked the idea. There was feasting in the twinkle of his eyes, in the folds of his double-clin, and in the quiet smile playing about his mouth. He was alone as yet. From a heap of turf and wood on the wide open hearth the fire flashed fitfully, throwing a broad bright gleam on the stone floor, but only half lighting the beams and rafters, from which hung pieces of bacon, bags of herbs, and the first handful of last year's harvest bound with a withered garland, and the dark recesses where the wood was stored, and where the clock and the dressers stood, all bedecked now with little bits of laurel and holly. On the shelves pewter plates and dishes shone like silver shields. Old Hugh had an aversion to delf, or clome, as he called it, and made very merry at times with his wife's Cheeny vagaries—the good lady's tastes in that line being humbly developed in a couple of spotted cows with tails turned over their backs, and a shepherd and shepherdess very mild and pastoral.

From behind the settle, ever and anon, as the oven was opened, came a goodly savour of newly-

baked bread, cakes, and pies. Female forms flitted to and fro, sending a pleasant look or a pleasant word to the old man as he sat waiting his guests. Their coming was anticipated in the presence of horn-cups on the table before him, and a large brown Toby Fill-pot jug, the only earthen thing he used, that he had been inveigled into buying by a Cheap-John, who held it before him, and said, "There, Miller, take this, and whenever you pour out your beer, you may see yourself without a looking-glass." The conceit tickled the old fellow, and he always chuckled when, at his evening draughts, he was confronted by the figure of the jolly toper.

Pleasant were the old man's musings as he sat basking in the firelight; many a low chuckle did he utter, and many a time might be seen—

"The slow wise smile that round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half within and half without,
And full of dealings with the world."

Pleasantly were they interrupted after a while by the presence of a young girl, who came softly around the settle, and stood before him on the hearth.

"Ah! Grace, lass, art dressed a'ready? Thee doesn't want much bedizening, and that thee know'st right well." And the old man's eyes laughed softly with pride and satisfaction as they

lighted on the pleasant beauty and comely proportions of his daughter. Grace Rosevear was indeed pleasant to look upon. Hers was the half Celtic half Saxon beauty—not rare in Cornwall—of the dark-grey eye, bright and gladsome, the oval face, the clear complexion touched with a healthful ruddiness, the light-brown hair, soft and rich, rippling in wavy folds around the forehead, and falling loosely in two long curls adown the neck. The charm of face and feature, however, were as nought to the brightness and kindliness which played over them like a sunny gleam. Her figure was tall and light, yet well rounded, and swelled fairly beneath the tight-fitting boddice and the full petticoat. Not refined, perhaps, was Grace, nor did she rejoice in the white hand or arched foot, but she was winsome and winning. Her only ornament to-night was a breast-knot of cherry-coloured ribbons. As his eye glanced on this, old Hugh laughed heartily.

“Ah! lass,” he said, “I am glad to see thee hast not forgotten thee fairing. On a night like this, a lad hath a right to see thee favour his token. I am right glad, too, that thee doesn’t wear the gimcrack that fellow Rich Curgenven gave thee.”

“Come, father, it is no gimcrack that brooch, but the purest gold from the mines; so Dick told me, and the lad himself is well enough, and hath a good favour and a glib tongue.”

"Gold or no gold, I care not. I mislike the chap, glib as he is. I never could take kindly to a man who couldn't look me in the face, and is always glowering askew. Besides, I doan't put any faith in a gad-about, who never knaws his own parish, and goes tramping about from place to place, furegathering with furreigners, and such like. I hope that I shall never see thee take on with a fellow who goeth trapping and tinkering about the country."

At the moment, in the height of his prejudices against wanderers, he fancied he saw his daughter in high-lows and a black velvet bonnet, with a bundle of sticks and umbrellas under her arm, following her spouse from house to house, or with a tambourine in her hand going from window to window, whilst he juggled with balls on an extemporised arena, or exhibited Punch.

"Well, father, if a rolling stone gathers no moss, a stay at home is always homely, and I likes to hear all his romancings about the strange people and the strange sights he hath seen; and he tells it all, brave and spirity, like the player-folk at the show."

"Romancing! Yes, half of 'em lies, and what good has ever come of all this gadding and sight-seeing. The father before 'im, old Dick Curgenvén, was always a-roving and a-rambling, a-trying this and that, Jack-of-all-trades and master of none; and what was the end of it? Why, he a'most come

to the parish afore he died. Noa, noa, give me a staid, kindly lad, like Phil Rounsval, who can be gay enough at feasting-time and revels, but was never away from tilling, or hoeing, or haymaking, or harvest-home. He's a good man, too, in the ring and at hurling. Old Champion Jan says, he never saw a likelier one; and he's a good man, too, on his own hearthstone."

Could old Rosevear have seen the light flush which the name of Phil called up, he would have dismissed any misgivings he might have of Grace's hankering for the rover, and have seen that her defence of him was a little wilfulness and caprice.

"I wonder, father, you favour Phil's gallivantings to the wrestlings and the feasts, when you are so hard upon another lad for roving and straying."

"'Tis a different thing—a different thing entirely. A man must show hisself a man, and should see what the lads of other parishes be like, and what be their ways and games, and he will settle down better afterwards to his own town-place. 'Tis foreigners I object to. There's no good in 'em. Old Pilot Joe will tell ye the same. Ah! here he comes."

He had entered at the moment, bringing with him a smell of sea-weed and tarred rope. With him was old John Truscott, burly ever, and bravely attired now in top-boots and breeches, a buff waistcoat, and a blue coat, very scant and short in the

waist. Another of the guests was old Jack Philp, the auctioneer, whose outer man was ever the same. No mortal, save perhaps the wife of his bosom, ever saw it represented otherwise than by Hessian boots, cords, a cut-away coat, and a hat which was a kind of compromise between a carter's and a dean's, such as became one who surveyed land and gathered tithes, and whose vocation was a sort of neutral ground betwixt the plough and the vestry. Whether he was ever divested of these externals, or how they were changed or renewed, the partner of his privacy alone could tell. He was a cheery old fellow, with a wrinkled weather-beaten face, ruddy withal, like an old apple, and was as famous for his prowess and hard-headedness at drinking-bouts, as old Truscott was for his wrestling. With these came other worthies; and the two young men followed shortly after,—Phil greeting the miller with a hearty grip, and making a sort of half-bashful, half-familiar salutation to Grace; Curgenvin sliding in almost unseen and unnoticed, until he had reached her side, and begun to make his advances in his usual dashing style, softening, however, his recklessness by an insinuating air of courtesy and gallantry—when his eye caught sight of the simple ribbon lying where his gift should have been, and then shot towards his rival a glance fierce, vengeful, and threatening as a snake's. Dame Rosevear, fat, hearty, and comely, as she ought in right to be, had mean-

while joined the circle, and passed compliments with her husband's cronies. She saw that glance, and interpreted it with a woman's readiness.

The company were all seated now around the fire, pipes were lighted, horns were filled, and pieces of saffron and currant cake handed about on platters.

"I was saying when you come in," began old Hugh, "that I never knowed any good come of mixing with furreigners, and that I never heard any good of most of 'em. You can't give 'em any great character, I think, Joe Treherne."

"God forbid that I should wrong 'em," answered the old pilot, "for I've met as true men among 'em, especially the fishermen in the French waters, as ever cast a net or worked a ship; but I never do feel quite comfortable or social with 'em somehow, for they'ern mostly cruel, oncertain, and wilful; not hearty and straightfor'ard as we be, but will carry their grudges in their hearts for years, and gie a man a stab or a shot, without word or warning."

"What of that?" cried Brazilian Dick. "Give me the wild brave life in the countries where men's hearts are warmed by the sunshine, and women's eyes flash brightly. What if there be sometimes a flashing knife or a death-grip—and if a man be found lying stabbed under a window, or falls dead and bloody under a gambling-table? There is some spirit in the dashing, rollicking life they

lead there; and 'tis better living, after all, than slouching about the same fields all one's days, with the clay clogging one's feet, and with scarce heart enough to look over the next fence."

"God keep us from such a life," murmured damo Rosevear; and Grace's cheek grew pale as she heard the rover speak so lightly of blood and murder.

"A man may be bold enough," rejoined Phil, "who never went abroad from his own town-place, and ha'e speret enough to hold his own, if his blood ben't heated with a blazing sun. The old stone down in the four-acre field by the 'Keeve' has never been moved for hundreds of years, and the Rounsvals for as long have stood on the same harthstone, and crossed the same threshold; though the roof and walls may have been changed. But there never was one of the breed yet that turned from a fair challenge. We ben't good at the knife or the back-stroke, but face to face with the fist or the hug, we never feared a man yet."

"Never mind about stay-at-homes, or stray-abroads," struck in champion Truscott. "If a man hath got the heart in 'im, he'll show it, whether he be working slate in Delabole quarry, or digging gold in a Portuguese mine." Then changing the drift of the conversation, he turned to old pilot Treherne. "So Joe, thee thinkest that the seafaring men are the best in all countries; nothing like sticking up for one's own trade."

“Good right too with me; for as long as the Rounsvals have been ploughing the farm at the ‘Keeve,’ have we Trehernes, faythers and sons, been going down to the sea in ships. Men and boys, for generations, have we been occupying our business in the great waters, and lived from the time we wero born, a’most to our graves, amid the wonders of the deep. Most on us, too, have meet our graves there. Three grown men only of us all have been carr’d to the old Botreaux churchyard, or had the prayers read o’er ’em.”

“That’s the worst of thee calling,” chimed in Jack Philp. “It must be oncommon cold lying down at the bottom of the sea, upon the sand and shells, with the waves washing over one, and the weeds twining around, and the great fish a-swimming about and looking at one. I must own that I shud like to be tucked in comfortable in a coffin, and have made my old dummun promise that I shud be laid in a four-wall grave, snug and cosy-like.”

“Sure thee doesn’t think that it matters where our poor bones be put to, maister Philp,” says dame Rosevear. “Thee doesn’t believe that the speret ever comes back to ’em. I never troubles my head much with sich doctrines. I thinks very much like old saxton Will. When Irish Kitty threatened to haunt ’im if he didn’t bury her under the ould yew-tree, he tould the parson o’ it. ‘Well,’ said the parson, ‘I ain’t afraid; are you?’ ‘No,’

says Will, 'I ben't afeard; for if her goeth to a good place, her won't want to come back; and if her goeth to the bad one, they won't let her.'"

"Natheless," answered the pilot, "it would be a comfort to know that I should ha'e to lie at last in the ould ground at Botreaux, with the winds from the furzy down blowing over it, and the sun lighting upon the turf, and the waves rippling agin the rocks nigh at hand. God knows, though, whether my cheeld will ever be able to tell where his fayther lieth. It is curious, though, that one of the few on us who did die in his bed, was my great-great-granfa'r, who was drove ashore on a piece of timber when the ship was wrecked, that was bringing the holy bells for the ould church of Botreaux."

"Tell us the tale, man!" cried miller Hugh; "I've heard 'un many a time from thee and thy fayther, but I'd like to hear 'un again. It's as good as a sarment any day—better than Parson Lanxon's, anyhow."

There was a general murmur of assent.

"Well," commenced the pilot, thus appealed to, "you know the townfolk at Boscastle many years ago were mad almost because there were no bells in Botreaux church, and it went to their hearts like, to hear them at Tintagel a-ringing and stramming at all times, while they had none to chime 'em to church or toll 'em to their graves, or send out a hearty peal at their weddings or feasting

days ; so they sent to some place far away, and had a fine set cast, and they were blessed by the pope or bishop, or some holy man. Now it so happened one Sunday, when the folks was all sauntering about on the cliffs arter church, that 'twas said how the ship with the bells was in sight, and that Pilot Treherne had gone aboard her. So the people thronged out like a fair, and sat about the rocks to watch the vessel ; and the young 'uns whispered to their sweethearts that there would be a merry peal now at their wedding, and the old 'uns thought how there would be a decent toll now at their buryings. Well, the ship came fairly along the coast ; the wind was free, and the sea smooth as glass. They had made Willapark Point, and the bells of Tintagel was ringing out loud and strong. This made the pilot so glad that he said, 'Thank God for our good voyage.' 'Thank the ship and the canvass,' said the captain ; 'thank God ashore.' 'We must thank Him at sea as well as on land,' said the pilot. 'No, thank the good timbers and a fair wind,' roared the captain, and he cussed and swore and blasphemed quite awful. Scarce had he spoke the words when great black clouds lowered in the sky, and the wind rose into a squall, and the waves tossed and tumbled towards the shore. The ship was took aback, and would not answer the helm, and kept drifting in and in on the rocks ; then a sea struck her, and drove her

right on the cliff of the Black Pit. She went to pieces instantly almost; and afore the people could look around, the spars was floating on the waters; and they thought that, with the beat of the surf and the roar of the winds, they heard the bells chiming out quite loud and solemn-like. Some of 'em climbed round the point to see if any one was saved, and there they see'd a man houlding on by a plank — 'twas my great-great-granfa'r the pilot. He was nigh gone; and when he came to hisself, the first words he spoke was, 'How sweet the bells be ringing!' and 'twas tould that on his deathbed he said that he heard the holy bells ringing him home."

There was a short pause after this legend. Old Truscott breaks it. "They do say now that of rough days, and in the heavy storms, the bells be heard clanging and booming whisht and mournful, and that if a man goeth on one of the holy nights to Willapark Point, the bells will tell 'un his fortune for the year."

"I have heard," chirped Jack Philp, "that a miller who don't live a hundred miles from the Rocky Valley, when he axed his lass if they were to be married that year, was tould to go and ax the bells. Dost thee know anything about that, Hugh Rosevear?"

"Maybe it was so, maybe it was so; but he never went, for he see'd a summat in her eye which

tould her mind truer than the bells, so he went to his bed instead."

"Tom Sloggett watched on the cliff one Christmas night," said Truscott, "and they do say heard a bell tolling for a burying. He was never his own agin, and died afore Easter."

"There is certainly some cursed spell about bells," burst forth Brazilian Dick, who had been moving uneasily and impatiently in his chair during the recital of the legend, and had ever and anon cast furtive glances from face to face, and from one part of the room to another. "I was haunted by a bell once myself. It never left me for years, and always came dinging and tolling some ill-luck upon me."

Grace shuddered as the word "haunted" fell on her ear, with the woman's instinct which ever associates supernatural visitation with crime and conscience. No one asked for the story, and yet Curgenvven went on with it impulsively and determinedly, as if it were a relief, though an effort, to tell it. "This is how it happened: We were working—a queer crew of us—together in one of the far-away mines. There were Spaniards, and half-castes, and Yankees, and among the rest was a Portugee. He was a gaunt sallow fellow, who never laughed, and seldom spoke, but worked, and gambled, and drank with the viciousness of a devil. Well, before long we lit upon a lode—a real rich

lode—and that made us madder than ever. Great lumps of gold ore fell down at every stroke of the pick, and we dug, and dug, till the sweat dropped through our shirts, and we could hardly stagger, and struck out quite wildly with our tools. Then we used to go all together to the mouth of the mine, and eat and drink, dice and sleep, for a few hours, till we were fit for work again. 'Twas a sort of devil's life; but it had its joys too, wild as they were—and we rushed and reeled through it like madmen. It was not long afore we had got enough to make us all rich men; but still we went on, until we looked more like ghosts doing some doom than men. We always worked, you must know, with knives and pistols in our belts, for we were mortal afraid of one another, and had hid all our treasure together in an old pit, swearing across our daggers, after the Spanish fashion, that we would be true to our comradeship, and revenge to the death any breach of faith or trust. One evening as we came up from our work, and looked about, as we always did, to see that all were together, the Portugee was missing. Suspicion gleamed in every eye at once. All hurried to the hole; the best and most disposable part of our winnings was gone. A yell of vengeance was raised; the work was dropped, and we were soon hot in pursuit. On horseback and fully armed, we started off; the Yankees ran on the track like

bloodhounds, and we followed, tracing the fugitive every night by his fires and the little bare spots where his horse had been tethered. At last the tracks ceased close by a deep thicket, with masses of rock rising here and there amid the brushwood and creepers. There were no paths through it, and the place seemed almost impenetrable. Here, however, we felt that our game was at bay, and we resolved to watch it closely. A camp was formed around, and each had his station. Mine was opposite a large rock, 'neath which was a dark hollow, covered by masses of overhanging foliage and tall grass. Night after night I kept my watch, fixing my eye on the opening ; and ever there seemed to be an eye meeting and answering mine. At last there came on one of those storms — common in those countries — the rain fell in sheets, the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed fierce and lurid, and the wind swept in gusts over the thicket as though it would uproot it altogether. Yet my watch relaxed not. Still my eye was fixed on the same spot, and still seemed to see the same gleam. Towards morn, the foliage shook and moved, and a man, haggard, worn, and spectre-like, came forth and stood before me. It was the Portugee. I prepared for a fight ; but there was no spirit of combat in him now. The eternal watch had subdued him, and he confessed that his soul had been cowed within him by the terror of the

eye bent unceasingly and vengefully upon him, and that he chose death rather than endure it longer. Some were for hanging him by Lynch law, but the majority were against it; and we resolved to give him up to the authorities of the nearest city. As our decision was made known, his cheek blanched, his eye quailed, and his whole frame shuddered. We were in hopes then that he would try to buy life by revealing where the stolen treasure was; but the thought of some day recovering the gold was dearer to him than the chances of life, and he would not speak. So we bound and pinioned him, and carried him to the town, where, strangely enough, he was recognised as one who had done a foul murder, and been sought everywhere. There we left him in prison, and went back to the mine, sullen and desperate with our loss. Soon after, I went back to the town for supplies. There was a crowd gathered in the great square—a murderer was to be garotted that day. Curiosity kept me there. It was a great space lined by soldiers, and in the midst was a large pillar with a seat in front, and the iron band, which was to close round the neck of the culprit, hanging from it. Presently a low chanting was heard, and a procession appeared, moving slowly and solemnly. The priests were singing the service for the dead, and behind came the prisoner clad in a black serge gown, pale, and worn, and deathly

A confessor was beside him, praying and exhorting. It was the Portuguese. On the procession moved towards the fatal chair. He was fixed in it ; the priest had uttered his last benediction ; the executioner behind was about to give the fatal turn, when the eye of the man turned, and fixed itself on me with a deadly glare. At the same moment a bell tolled, and the glance of the eye seemed to carry the boom right into my heart. In a moment it was all over ; there was a contortion of the face, a quiver of the frame, and then all was still, and the eye glazed in death. For years after, that eye and the toll of that bell haunted me. When I was throwing the dice, or lifting the wine-cup, or standing in the dance, they would flash and boom upon me with a terrible spell ; but this soon wore off, for we men of the world cannot afford to give in long to weak superstitions. I had almost forgotten it till your foolish story of the Botreaux bells brought back the memory."

This narrative, delivered as it was in fierce rapid tones, threw a chill over the party. Grace grew pale, and trembled at intervals ; her mother sighed and groaned deeply ; the rest were silent. The thing was too real, too dramatic for them.

There was little more conversation until supper came. That was the old story of huge joints, pies, puddings, cheeses, heaps of cake, jugs of cider and beer, and large hearty appetites. After it the elders

again grouped around, and gradually fell into the old grooves. Champion Truscott wrestled his matches o'er again; Dame Rosevear told anecdotes of a favourite cow; the pilot spoke of gales marvellous in their fierceness and intensity; old Hugh maundered over old traditions; and Jack Philp gave his only experience of ghosts—telling how he was coming back one night by the churchyard; how he had there seen three parsons attired in surplices, and with books in their hands, walking round the grave of a man who had committed suicide; how he had been warned back; and how shortly afterwards he had seen a ball of fire pass three times round the church-tower and then disappear. This he supposed was the ceremony of laying the ghost. Old Truscott told, as a counter-story to this, that Jack was returning on the occasion from a tithe-meeting, was found next morning under a haystack, and had been observed during the evening to run against the landlord's pig, and there and then take off his hat, with a polite bow, and say, "I beg pardon, your reverence." So that the ghost-laying was not received as authentic.

Meanwhile Grace had slipped away, so had Phil, and the absence of the Brazilian was considered such a relief that none inquired about it.

Thus the night wore on, and the hand was on the stroke of the hour which should usher in the Christmas morn.

CHAPTER III.

At the mill-dam head, leaning over a railing, were two figures looking down into the little pool beneath. The valley was all alight with moonbeams, the cascades flashed with silvery brightness, and the stars above had each a fellow in the pools below. The rocks cast a dark shadow on them, and ever and anon behind them flitted a stealthy shade ; before them all was bright and clear.

"Come, Grace," says Phil, "it is time now that thee shouldst speak out to me plain and free. I've been a true sweetheart to thee for two years—have loved and followed thee like a man ; and sure thee wouldst not turn me off after so long a 'prenticeship."

"Art tired then, Phil, of thy wooing, that thou art so pressing now, or hast thou grown jealous and mistrustful? Sure I have not favoured any lad so much as I have thee. Canst not wait a while?"

"God forbid, Grace, that I should hurry thee ; but there's a pleasant home for thee, and my mother's place empty, so why should I live the lonesome life any longer? Besides, there's that Brazilian chap sneaking around thee, and he means mischief, and I should like to have a right to stand up for thee like a man."

"That means, Phil, that thou hast a grudge agin 'im, and would like to make a quarrel."

"No, no, I don't want to quarrel with any man, most of all about thee ; but he is cruel aggravating, and I can't bear to see 'im always looking at thee with that keen false eye of his."

The shade was drawing nearer now, hung close o'er them, and was reflected in the pool beneath, though they saw it not.

"Come then, Grace, dear," again insinuated Phil, passing his arms lightly round the girl's waist ; "say the word, when shall the wedding be ? Thy fayther favours me, thy mother loves me well, and 'tis but a step from the farm to the mill."

"Go ask the bells, Phil ; 'tis Christmas night. They perhaps may tell thee."

"I would sooner hear it from thy lips, or see it in thy face ; but if it meet thy fancy, I wull go to the cliff—'tis but a walk this fine night—and I shall be thinking of thee as the Christmas morn breaks."

"Well, then, go along, Phil ; and that thou mayest not play the same trick as fayther did, thou shalt bring me a bunch of sea-pink, gathered off the brink."

"I won't deceive thee, lass, and thou wilt meet me to-morrow at the chapel by the 'Keeve'?"

"Yes, yes ; good-night, Phil." As she spoke, he saw in the young girl's face that which made his

heart leap with a joy that needed no token from the bells. Gently he drew her towards him, gave one fervent honest kiss, and then bounded across the little stream on his way to the Willapark Head.

The dark shade writhed and turned around them now, and then glided away like a serpent from an Eden.

Gaily did Phil then breast the steep, going forward on his mission with a heart as bold and true as knight ever went forth with to a deed of "derring do." Grace watched the figure of her lover from her casement, and ever as it moved saw another shadow following, and tracking his, creeping stealthily behind, yet never nearing it. A strange dread crept over her, and long long she strained her eyes into the darkness, her heart beating with a new fear.

Phil has passed by the grey old church now, with its loose stone wall and its mossy gravestones, and has looked to the bell-less tower, and half wished there was a chime there to ring forth a joy-peal on his wedding-day. He is standing at the edge of the black pit; the deep chasm yawns beneath, the dark black walls descend in steep veined precipices to the depth below, and their shadows cast a sullen heavy gloom on the waters. It is the only dark spot around. The waves beyond are sparkling brightly, and dimpling in the light wind. He looks on them for a while, half hoping to hear a ghostly peal borne over them; but there is no sound save

that of the surf amid the rocks and caverns. He turns again to the pit, and a slight chill passes over him as his eye falls on its grave-like darkness. He is stooping now to gather the sea-pink in a little nook in the cliff. The shadow has followed him steadily, and is now winding and creeping behind him. As he rises, it rises, leaps upon him, and a bright blade flashes in the air. A slight stoop has saved him; it passes over. He turns, clutches at the dagger, and has the Brazilian by the throat. Their eyes meet, and the men feel that the struggle is one of life and death. They are on the edge of the cliff now; the grass is dry and slippery; each feels that a move is destruction. Sternly and silently they hold their grip, their eyes fixed and their feet firm. Phil's skill avails him little; the Brazilian is more at home in such strife. The moments are hours. They scarce drew breath. Suddenly the Brazilian, desperate and wild, puts forth his strength in one fierce effort to draw his foe towards the cliff. The men totter—they overhang the dark chasm. Phil is foremost, and he sees the dark waters glooming beneath. Suddenly a wild gust is borne over the waters, and on it there comes the toll of a bell. The Tintagel clock is chiming the midnight hour. The eye of the Brazilian turns for a moment—the powerful arm of his opponent seizes the vantage, and the next he is hurled with a resistless heave over the precipice.

Fiercely he clings to his foe ; both men fall, but Phil has grasped the grass and earth by the edge ; the Brazilian falls down, down into the blackness of the pit. There is no crash, no splash, but the silence of death. Long and desperately Phil struggles ; it is for life. Again and again his knee is on the cliff ; again it slips ; his hold is failing—the darkness of the rock seems closing on him—a death-knell clangs at his heart. One more brave effort—one more stout grasp at the sod, and he has won the bank ; he has struggled back into life. Sweat bursts from every pore, a dizziness floats around him, and a sickness as that of death. The Tintagel bells burst out with a merry chime, and strike on him as a mockery as he looks on the dark hell beneath. The Christmas morn has begun ; he grasps a handful of the flowers, and thus sadly and heavily does he greet the tokens he had sought and won, whilst the Black Pit looms as a dark doom before him.

CHAPTER IV.

The little stream of the rocky valley did not act its tiny turbulence throughout its whole course. It had a gentler existence and softer intercourse with meadows and orchards and copses. It was not always a brawler, but had its earlier babbling, purring, and murmuring stages, running gently over

sand and gravel, and meeting seldom with greater obstructions than a chance stone or jutting bank, such as could be overcome by a light rippling effort. Once, however, in the quiet retired stage of its career, it had met with a great obstacle to its progress, and, like many quiet natures in such emergencies, had then put forth an unwonted vigour and will. The obstacle was a large rock, which rose directly in its path, and slightly above its bed. Through this upper part it had forced its way by a large hole, like the mouth of a pitcher, and from it fell on a projecting shelf into a self-wrought basin, shallow and shell-shaped as a baptismal font, overflowing which its waters gushed in a full straight fall into a gravelled reservoir beneath, and then purred on again with their wonted calmness as though they had never met a resistance, or put forth an effort. True to its similitude with quiet natures, however, it had made this effort unobtrusively and in seclusion. The scene of the waterfall was a little deep dell, overhung by trees and thick foliage, which crept and twined and clustered over every part of the bank and rock where the stream was not, and framed it with masses of verdure. It was a great haunt of birds, where they had their glees and oratorios, and was much favoured by wildflowers and creepers. The spot was called St Kneighton's Keeve. The word *keeve* means font, it is supposed, but who this Kneigh-

ton the Baptist was, even tradition knows not ; or whether it was on the front of infidels, or on the brows of the knights of the round table, that he dashed the pure flood, and made the holy cross. The ruins of a small chapel or oratory on a platform overhanging and overlooking the cascade, testify to the some-time existence of such religious eremite. And we could almost forgive him for his asceticism, his water-and-cress meals, his isolate piety, and his uncommuned prayers, when we looked on the still verdant beauty of the spot where he had placed his soul in solitude with God. Winter had stripped the trees and creepers of their leaves now, but amid the tumbling walls of the chapel, and on the plateau beside, was the evergreen verdure of many an arbutus and holly-bush, and here and there a dwarf oak. The scene had still its drapery ; and almost hidden by a screen of berries, bright-green leaves, and suchlike Christmas foliage, there sat on a stone directly above the waterfall one whom hermits even might have looked upon with admiration, so simple and bright was her beauty, freshened now by the clear crisp air, and toned, perhaps, by the solemnity of the services she had just joined in. This was the trysting-place, and Grace was waiting her lover. The tryst was to her a pleasant one, and she scarcely felt, under the influences around her, impatience or displeasure at being the first comer. In the sonorous fall and cheerful dash of the waters, she

seemed again to hear the swell and joyful choruses of the jubilee anthems, and in the rustling of the bare branches and the shrubs, listened again to the echoed voice of uttered prayer.

The dread of the night before had passed away, or been forgotten. Her soul was calm and happy in its trysting. A step breaks the silence; so slow, so broken—can that be Phil Rounsval? Again her heart asks the question as she looks on a face so woe-stricken—on a form so bent and shrunk in its strength—on an expression so wanting in its old manliness and honesty, so shrouded with gloom and agony, that she almost thinks it must be the apparition of her old lover, and fears to break the spell of his presence.

At last her voice and her fears find utterance.

"Phil—Phil, what ails thee? what has happened? what hast seen? what has come upon thee?"

With a ghastly smile he tendered her a bunch of sea-pinks, crushed and already withered.

"There, Grace; there is the token that I did thy behest. Didst thou know at what cost it was done, thou wouldst cast it from thee like a curse."

"No, Phil; I never could believe that it came in ill—and it shall be ever dear to me;" and as she spoke, the crumpled flowers were placed in her bosom. "Some misfortune has befallen thee, but thou hast not done a crime, Phil—no, Phil, that is not in thy nature. My heart misgave me as I looked

out from my window last night" (her anxiety overcame her maiden modesty now), "and saw a black shadow of a man crawling after thee. 'Twas Rich Curgenvén, I know. What was there betwixt thee? what hast done? Tell me—tell me, man. Oh tell me, my love," and this time it was her arm which twined round him, and her hand which closed in his. He writhed, and turned from that gentle pressure.

"No, no, Grace; thou must not touch me. There is blood on my hand—murder in my soul."

"In mercy, Phil, speak out," gasped the young girl, her face ashen with terror, her frame trembling and quivering with fear.

"I will tell thee, Grace, if it be my last words. Thou shalt know the truth. I went, thou knowest, at thy bidding, to the cliff, and was plucking the sea-pink for thee, and listening for the sound of the bells on the waters, when I saw quite sudden the flash of a blade before me, and felt a man's hand upon me. It was Brazilian Dick. We strove there on the brink of the Black Pit, man to man—hours I think, and at last there was a whirl and a shock as if the earth was upheaving, and I saw him shot down like a great black bird over the cliff, throwing out his arms and grasping at the darkness, and felt myself hanging by the clench of one hand on the turf. 'Twas done in self-defence—not in malice, God knows; but oh, Grace, Grace! my hand has

taken life, and I have lost my peace—lost thee, lost everything."

And the strong man shook in his agony, as if ague-stricken, and the tears dropped slow and heavily through the hands which covered his face. A man's tears, ever such a mournful sight, overcame poor Grace entirely, and she laid her head on her lover's shoulder, sobbing and weeping bitterly. The greatness, the suddenness of the calamity, overpowered her at first, but with the elasticity of woman's strength, tender and supple, bending and breaking not, she was the first to recover from the dread sorrow.

"Rise up, Phil; look up, man," she said. "There may be blood on thy hand, but there is no guilt on thy soul. Thou hast done a man to death, but 'twas in self-defence, in right of thy own life, and God will forgive thee for it. But thou must face the deed before the world. Thee must, Phil—thee must."

And her hand took his—'twas her gentle strength which lifted him up; her strength which bore the bulk of the strong man over the loose stones, up the rocky path, over the stiles, and on to his own threshold. There stood John Truscott, with a gloom resting on his open face like a cloud on a broad field, shading, but not shadowing it, as though it had no right to a being there. She knew what his presence meant; he was parish

constable ; so she gave her lover's hand one gentle clasp, passed her hand over his brow, muttered a short prayer, "God help thee, Phil," and then sped down the valley to weep and pray in her own chamber.

Confronted with his own sex, Phil's manhood arose again erect and strong ; his brow cleared, and his eye looked out calm and confident.

"I know thy errand, Champion Jan," he said, "and wilt go with thee—don't handcuff me. I couldn't bear that—couldn't bear to go like a criminal through the streets."

"Never fear, Phil ; I will do my duty gently by thee, lad. 'Tis a black business, but I never will believe thee dost it wilfully. I have known thee boy and man for years, and never saw thee do a vengeful or wilful thing. Tell us, lad, all about it. I feel like a fayther to thee, and would help thee all I can."

Confidence begat strength. Phil roused himself, thought over the incidents of that fearful night, and gave them in a detail more circumstantial than they had yet occurred to himself, and his heart was lightened thereby. Thus he went on to meet the charge of murder, upheld by his own uprightness, comforted by the memory of Grace's tenderness and love.

CHAPTER V.

Early on that Christmas morn, old Joe Treherne had gone out in his boat, had sailed round the Willapark Point, and stood in towards the Black Pit. With his wonted habit, he was scanning the shore, and running his eye over the cliff and the precipice, when it lit on something strange lying on a shelving slit in the wall of the rock. He thought at first it was a calf or goat fallen over; but then it seemed to have a sort of motion; the wind was raising the clothes, and he thought it must be a man. He put the boat close in, jumped on the ledge, and saw indeed the body of a man. A glance at the dress sufficed to recognise Richard Curgenvén. The legs hung dangling, and seemingly lifeless, the body lay still and deathlike, the arms stiff and motionless by its side; the pallor of death was on the face, but the eyes still rolled and glared, and the breath of life came from the lips and nostrils in quick and fitful respirations. The hands were cut and bleeding, and one still clutched a silk neckerchief with a firm numbed grip.

"Here has been some wild work," muttered the pilot. "'Twas no false or tipsy step that brought this man over the cliff. Dick hath met with a fall from some hand or other."

As he lifted up the body, he saw no trace of wound

or blow ; the limbs and trunk were paralysed and powerless—the only vitality was in the mouth and eye. The collar and shirt about the throat were torn and displaced ; and as Joe and his mate carried their burden to the boat, the empty sheath of a knife dropped from the sash around the waist.

“Hot blood, cold steel, and a death-grip have been the story here, I expect. I hope young Faarmer Phil had nought to do with this business,” said old Joe, as he made a bed of coats and sails in the boat for the dying man.

“I hope not—I hope not, pilot ; but there was ever a grudge atwixt ’em ; and both of ’em had a liking for Miller Rosevear’s lass ; and one never knows what a man will do when his heart is jealous, like.”

Sadly and silently they pulled back into the harbour. Not a moan or a groan came from Curgenven ; but the eye flashed and wandered as though in search of some unseen thing. A door was soon unhung, and a mattress placed on it to make a litter, on which he was conveyed to a cottage where he had lodged. A crowd soon gathered round, and made a kind of procession. The story, with all kinds of exaggeration, went from house to house, and lip to lip ; Phil’s name was gradually connected with the event, and the bruit went abroad that Brazilian Dick had been thrown over the cliff and murdered by young Rounsval. Meanwhile he

had been placed on a bed, and the doctor had been sent for. Fracture of the vertebræ and laceration of the spinal cord was his verdict, caused, he said, by the fall. There was no hope of life; but death might not ensue for hours, perhaps for days, and there might be intervals of consciousness, and partial restoration of the mental powers. On examination no mark was found which indicated violence; but the kerchief clutched in the hand was soon identified as having belonged to Rounsva, and a pin stuck in it was recognised as an old and treasured heirloom of his family. This and many corroborative circumstances made a body of circumstantial evidence which was considered sufficient to lead to the apprehension of Phil. Gossipry was soon rife, and produced the story with every kind of variation. One version was, that Dick had been pixy-led, and had thus lost his way and tumbled down into the Black Pit. Another told how he had been haunted and bewitched by the sound of a bell, and had gone on and on following its sound, until he was enticed over the cliff. Another detailed more circumstantially how he and Grace had met up by the Point, how Phil had followed them, how they were just breaking the ring in sign of troth, when he had sprung forward and pushed the happy lover down the precipice; how Grace had tried to spring after him, and how she had swooned away, and been found in this state by the old sexton on

the steps of the church, when he had gone to open the door.

For a long time the dying man lay in a kind of stupor, without sign or motion. Very strange and awful was this life in death—this struggle of strong vitality with fate. After some hours, a feverish strength seemed to seize upon the brain, and set eye and tongue in vivid motion. This spasmodic action of thought, and look, and speech—the terrible memories which flashed forth in ghastly glances, and were shouted out in wild utterances, were in fearful contrast with the deadness which had spread over the poor body from the neck downwards. The limbs could no longer respond to the impulses of the will, or sympathise with the workings of the spirit.

At times the ravings were of past things, and horrible enough were these revelations. At times he would be on the pirate's deck rejoicing in fiendish laugh at the tortures of his victims as they went over into their watery grave—at times would be launching out imprecations and curses in the slaver's hold—at times would live through the scenes of the past night, mixing up its memories with those of other days, tangling all the dark threads of life together.

"Ah! that accursed bell!" thus he raved—"that cursed eye! I had him fast and sure—'twas my turn, then. How pale he looked as he was

tottering on the brink! How he clutched my throat! I feel his fingers now, hot and throttling. Then that bell,—boom—boom—it came on my ear, and that eye flashed like lightning from the clouds. Then my feet slipped. How it donged into my ear and shot into my brain as I hung on by that rock. What are those priests chanting the burial-service for? There is no one in that chair! there is only an eye. How it pierces; I can't look at it! My hold is giving! How sharp the rock is! I can't look up for that eye, and I can't go down to that dark hell down there. That pale lady and her husband and her child are down there, looking as they did when we made them walk the plank. What are those black fellows crawling up the rock for? Chain them!—lash them! Thrust them down—down into the black pit!"

Exhaustion soon followed, and he fell into a fitful broken sleep. When he awoke again, his mind had recovered its consciousness, and was yielding to the influences of the physical prostration. The spirit had sunk into a sort of calm; its fierceness was succeeded by a half-sullen, half-penitent mood. There was apathy rather than dread of death; indifference rather than remorse; and it was then that, in the presence of many witnesses, he avowed that he had sought Phil Rounsval's life, and that the struggle in which he had met his death was of his own seeking. Investigation soon brought cor-

roboration of this confession. Grace testified to having seen him follow Rounvsal up the hill; old Truscott had gone to the spot, and there, shining in the grass, found a knife which had been worn by Curgenvén. General conviction set with the proof of facts, and there could no longer be cause or reason for Phil's detention. Never did Truscott perform a duty more gladly and heartily than when he announced Phil's liberation. The tear stood in his eye, and his strong voice faltered as he congratulated him. "And now then, lad," said he, "when thou hast thanked God for thy deliverance, home to thy sweetheart, and thou mayest yet have a happy Christmas."

"No, no! I must see 'un once more. Though I'm innocent in intent, I took his life, and must have his forgiveness." They were alone now in that chamber of death—the once rivals, the two strong men—the one bowed by sorrow, the other lying broken and prostrate on the threshold of eternity. Slowly Phil advanced towards the bed, and looked down on that pale face; the death sweat was on the brow now, and the eyes were half closed. As they opened on him, there shot a ray of their wonted glare, but this passed away as Phil knelt down by the bedside, and said softly and calmly, "Dick, Dick, I bore thee no malice—I meant thee no harm. Let us forgive one another ere thou goest hence. Let us part in peace."

There came no voice in answer; the power of speech had gone, but the eye looked out peace and reconciliation; and as Philip Rounsval prayed there by that bedside, the stain of blood passed away from his soul.

CHAPTER VI.

'Twas Christmas night, and the fire was blazing on Hugh Rosevear's hearth, but it lighted up no merriment or gladness there. Sad and melancholy was the group by that fireside. A few short hours had brought a change as though years had passed and gone, and had brought age and blight and woe. The old miller sat in his old place, silent and mournful, with his head bowed on his chest, his eyes bent on the ground. Before him was a large old Bible, and on the open page lay his horn spectacles. His wife was on a stool at his feet, rocking to and fro, and sobbing, bursting forth into exclamations, half sorrowful, half-prayerful. Opposite sat Grace, pale, and still as a statue, but tearless and resigned, her sorrow touched with the strength of trust, and the hopefulness which cometh from prayer. Thus the night was speeding when the latch was lifted, a footstep was heard on the floor, and Phil stood among them. 'Twas like an apparition, but the presence brought at once a sense of

relief and instinct of joy. The old miller sat up erect once more. The dame uttered a fervent "Thank God!" and Grace glided silently to her lover's side.

"Phil," said the old man, "I know'st thou art free, and hast proved thy innocence, or thou wouldst not have come to my hearthstone. Thank God for it. My heart will keep Christmas-time yet."

"Yes, yes, miller, thou shouldst never have see'd me again unless I could look in thy face, and stand before thee a clear man. He confessed all, told how he had tried to stab me as I stooped down, and how 'twas in self defence I threw 'im from the cliff. We have parted in peace."

There was not much demonstration or utterance in the joy which followed. It was calm and solemn, such as falls on hearts which have passed from trial and suffering into peace and gladness.

Shortly after midnight old Truscott brought the last tidings from the death-bed. "He has passed away," he said—" 'tis all over. He was calm and peaceful-like at the last. Old Goody says she heard him say some prayer, though 'twas in a foreign tongue. As the bells chimed the hour from Tintagel, too, a sort of faint smile came over his face, and his lips was moving, and then 'twas all still, still."

And so closed the Christmas day which had dawned so darkly.

The summer was at its full, the sun fell brightly on the downs and on the old church-tower of Botreaux. The sea was smooth, and lay basking in the brightness; the furze and the heath were in full bloom, and the scent of thyme and clover mingled freshly with the sweet air, when a marriage-train passed on to the old church. Old Hugh was there, old Truscott, gay and hearty, and all our old friends. And as Phil and Grace passed out again, linked arm-in-arm, they looked up significantly at the silent tower, and then back lovingly into each other's face, as though they felt there needed no bells to peal the gladness of their hearts.

The events of that terrible night left their impress on Phil in a certain seriousness which shaded, though it did not cloud, his cheerfulness. He was never known to lay his hand on a man again. The ring knew him no more. But his hearthstone knew him well. On it he stood ever a glad and happy man, and he was often known to say that the voices of his wife and children, as he crossed his threshold, rang a merrier peal on his heart than could ever have come from the holy bells of Botreaux.

A RECENT CONFESSION OF AN OPIUM-EATER.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL E. B. HAMLEY.

[MAGA. DECEMBER 1856.]

[This paper was written and published, as a piece of good-humoured banter, during Mr De Quincey's lifetime. It is probable that if he read it, he would not be displeased with it, containing as it does, evidence of a study of his style so careful as to be in itself a compliment; and, in fact, it was accepted at the time, by at least one eminent critic, as the genuine production of the Opium-Eater himself.]

THERE is no necessity for telling the reader how I came into the company with which he will find me associated in the ensuing narrative; and there are several reasons why he need not be informed on that point. In the first place, he has no right to inquire; for I hold, and always have held, and maintained, both in argument and practice, that a man is responsible only to himself for the company he chooses to keep. 2dly, Supposing he had the right to ask (which, as already stated, I deny), still it

would be inconvenient for me to tell him. 3dly, Supposing he had the right, and I were willing to acknowledge it, it would nevertheless be useless to the purpose of the story I am about to narrate, and therefore a crime against art. 4thly, Because any consistency and completeness which the narrative might gain by the relation of the circumstances antecedent to the position, at once intensely horrible and highly amusing, whither they conducted me, are sufficiently attained by the mention of the fact that, while enjoying with the full appreciation of a refined and extremely sensitive nature the appliances of luxury and wealth, I have never shrunk from studying the aspect of humanity in the Rembrandt-like chiaroscuro of vice and crime. In search of the harmonies which slumber in the soul of man, I have sounded the base string of society. Leaving the splendours and decencies of the upper regions of our social atmosphere, I have voluntarily descended into depths filled with fetid and noxious exhalations, and I have ever returned to the light of common day with an intensified sense of the unfathomable mysteries and the unutterable melodies hidden in the profoundest abysses of our nature.

Some of my readers will probably remember that particular epoch in the history of crime when murder became the handmaid of medical and surgical science, whose requirements, at that time greatly extended by the ardour of discovery, were by no

means satisfied either by the legal offerings of the bodies of criminals, or the more adventurous, though less legitimate, contributions of surreptitious exhumation. The impulse communicated to that branch of study which deals with the mysteries of our physical nature, by the great anatomists and physicians who stand in conspicuous array on the line which separates dusky empiricism from luminous science, had awakened cravings in the minds of our students which could no longer be stilled by such eleemosynary and desultory aid. To satisfy these cravings, a race of miscreants arose, whose peculiar province in the field of assassination may be denominated enlightened Thuggism. But their atrocities, though serving a more practical purpose than those of the Thug, had their origin in a far less elevated motive. There is too much reason to believe that a mercenary desire to obtain the price of the body predominated, in most instances, over the wish to advance the interests of science; while even the better of these influences is still far inferior to the religious fervour which prompted the tightening of the oriental noose. Be that as it may, it was at a time when the horrible trade had gained the utmost extent and organisation it was destined to attain, before the revelation of its iniquities had caused that outburst of popular execration which extinguished it utterly, instantaneously, and for ever, as with the blast of a hurricane, that the

incidents occurred to which I am about to draw the reader's attention.

The scene, then, is a squalid and dingy chamber in the topmost flat of one of the many-storeyed and ancient dwellings which still give individuality to the Old Town of Edinburgh. The sole furniture of the apartment was a battered and time-defaced table, stained with grease and liquor, having a bench of similar character on each side. In a bottle on the table was stuck a long candle of the commonest description, whose flaring and drooping wick shed a dull light on the faces of the company. How I came to be in such a scene, and among such persons as I am about to describe; is, as I have already intimated, no business of the reader's. Suffice it that I was there, the occupant of one of the benches, while opposite me sat three individuals, two men and a woman. Long-nosed Bill, the central person of the three, possessed a remarkably villanous physiognomy, which, the index as it was to mental features equally singular and truculent, rendered him a highly interesting subject of philosophical contemplation. His nose was, as his name indicated, very long, and overhung so as almost to conceal a mouth so small, thin, and compressed, as to appear to have been made with a knife after the rest of his countenance was designed; while on each side of the main feature, sparkled an eye, deep-set, small, grey, and inexorable. His head, phrenologically speaking, was not bad, being of

sufficient height, though the forehead was concealed by straight black locks; the countenance, widest at the forehead and narrowing almost to a point at the chin, was of a pale clay-colour; and the sole expression was one of truculent vigilance and resolution. On William's right was seated a more commonplace miscreant, whose coarseness of appearance and conversation betokened atrocity unredeemed by refinement, and whose name of Squabby (by which his companions addressed him) was not without a certain philological fitness. One of those external indications of character which garments often convey, appeared in the contrast afforded by the dress of these men; for while Bill's shabby, scanty, and close-buttoned black coat rather exaggerated the unfavourable impression made by his thin angular form and cadaverous countenance, and seemed to show that he despised those little ameliorations in costume which are within reach of the humblest, Squabby's gaudy waistcoat, and gorgeous jewellery of glass and copper, showed all the inclination without the power to be what in these latter days is denominated "a swell." The word dandy, which, at the time I speak of, was the generic term for all who cultivated ostentatiously, with whatever degree of success, the art of costume, fails to convey the idea of exuberance and floridity expressed in the newer appellation. Squabby, therefore, was a vulgar swell.

Their female companion — faded, though still young — possessed, nevertheless, a face whose expression frequently drew my gaze. This was owing not so much to her beauty, which could never have been of a striking character, as to the likeness she bore to a young girl with whom I had some years before been curiously, intimately, and most romantically connected. Ah Catherine! even now, when I summon from the dim past thy angel face, with the mild imploring look I last beheld there — imploring a speedy return, where fate was even then writing, with iron pen, the stern decree that for me to thee there should be no return — even now, as those eyes so beseechingly beam on me through the distance of many lustres, my heart owns that there are sympathies over which time has no control. That likeness, faint as it was, perhaps altogether fanciful, awoke feelings which, as they arose, brought with them a crowd of memories — and hence the charm which a face, to others, perhaps, commonplace, had for me, though there was nothing in the manner, appearance, or conversation of this young woman which distinguished her as in any way very superior to the scene and the society in which the reader finds her.

It must not be imagined that we had no other occupation in this dreary and ill-lighted apartment than that of looking at each other. Another bottle, besides that which officiated as candlestick, stood

on the table ; or, I should rather say, paced round it, for it seldom halted much longer than was necessary for the filling of the cracked glass which stood before each of us. Our liquor was port, a choice made at my suggestion, and Long-nosed Bill had coincided with a hearty cordiality which his appearance did not certainly promise, but the motive of which I afterwards divined. He had sent the girl out for a dozen bottles ; and though almost abstaining himself, and restraining also the manifest inclination of Squabby for the generous liquor, he pressed it on me with a hospitality that seemed incapable of being repressed or chilled.

Meanwhile the conversation did not flag. Squabby, finding in me an interested and attentive auditor, talked much and loudly, but with a certain coarseness which would have disgusted me had not his loquacity perpetually started subjects which the sagacious William treated with a masterly terseness, such as I have seldom heard equalled. But the great charm of his conversation was its mystery. The numerous adventures in which he appeared to have been engaged had neither beginning nor end. Of secret expeditions, of hairbreadth escapes, of rapid flights, there were sufficient to set up a modern novelist for several seasons—but the spring and motive of all these were wanting. Why these expeditions were planned, what pursuers he had escaped from, and why flight was necessary, were

questions which I had to call in my imagination and invention to respond to, and thus to string on theories of my own the broken links of his narrative. Equally mysterious, though more boisterous, was the conduct of Squabby, who frequently made jesting allusions to their peculiar vocation, which, though to me utterly devoid of meaning, caused a cynical smile to flit across the astute physiognomy of his friend, while the woman responded with a low and musical laugh generally smothered in the corner of her shawl. This mystery veiling the subject of their conversation, without concealing its main outlines, lent to it the interest which awakened and baffled curiosity has always excited in my mind from my earliest days. My part was not, however, merely that of a listener or a guesser. I hesitated not to exchange sentiments and experiences with these humble friends, who granted me the same attention which I in my turn gave to them; and I remember regarding it as a striking proof that no eloquence, if genuine, is beyond the appreciation of the rudest minds, when on one occasion I having delivered a magnificent quotation in a manner (as I flatter myself) to do full justice to its sonorous flow, and having told them the words were those of the great Burke, they heard his name with startled interest, and were silent for some moments after. However, I now conjecture there might be other reasons for the agitation caused by that glorious name.

I had probably drunk about two bottles of wine to my own share, Squabby nearly as much, and the abstemious Bill perhaps about a bottle, when I thought I perceived a diminution in the cordiality of this latter entertainer. I am naturally extremely sensitive in such matters—indeed so morbidly alive to the faintest indications of failing hospitality, as sometimes to conceive suspicions regarding the sincerity of my welcome, which I am subsequently satisfied are groundless. However, in the present instance, there could be no doubt that Long-nosed Bill not only ceased to talk himself, but listened to me with manifest impatience, and sometimes exchanged glances with his two companions, while those he cast on me bore rather the character of animosity than cordiality. Under these circumstances I considered it due to myself, as well as to my hosts, to rise and bid them good-night. This sudden move of mine produced an instantaneous change in the manner of Long-nosed Bill, who pressed me to stay with more than his former hospitality, while, at a wink from him, Squabby placed himself between me and the door, and, with boisterous but good-humoured reproaches on my breach of good-fellowship, refused to let me pass. All this, however, would have had small effect in inducing me to remain after the change in Bill's manner towards me; but just then the woman also joined her entreaties to his. In so doing she used a tone

and gesture which at once arrested me. They were such as recalled vividly the tone and gesture which a young girl had unconsciously assumed some years before when I was parting from her in anger. Ah, Emily ! potent indeed was the charm of thy pleading over my offended and recusant spirit. Hard indeed would it have been to turn from those eyes—to repel that offered embrace. Years had passed, Emily, since I had seen thee—many feelings and many memories had crowded in between—but the voice and look of a stranger recalling thine, showed that even the faint and distant echo of thy powerful spell could still enchain me. I need scarcely say I resumed my seat.

Long-nosed Bill now became more agreeable and hospitable even than at first, relating passages in his career still more marvellous, and passing the wine with increased rapidity, insisting at each round of the bottle on filling my glass himself, and calling out pleasantly, "No heeltaps," before doing so. For a time this amused me ; and I was also interested in watching a little by-play carried on by Bill's companions. The woman was no doubt united to him in bonds more or less hallowed, and Bill, with the watchful prudence which his countenance betokened, seemed perpetually on his guard to prevent the slightest familiarity between her and Squabby. Notwithstanding all his vigilance, I observed, however, that, whenever his attention was

distracted by the friendly office of filling my glass, or whenever he grew so interested in any of his narratives as to relax his watchfulness for a moment, the woman, stealthily passing her hand behind him, clasped that of Squabby extended to meet it. To a philosopher and student of human nature this slight incident was amply sufficient to reveal a tale of passion—a tale which it saddened me to read. I saw in Long-nosed Bill an instance of the insufficiency of the most astute and powerful intellect to restrain the erratic propensities of the female heart. Here was this great man, who had lavished perchance his whole heart, staked his whole faith, on the woman beside him, while she, like the base Judæan throwing this pearl away richer than all her tribe, bestowed in secret her love upon one conspicuously Bill's inferior in every respect, except that his personal appearance was rather less revolting. Miserable mistake! accursed error! yet one to which the feminine nature is peculiarly liable. The remembrance of such an error, of which I was myself the victim, is still as a dagger to my heart. For thee, Augusta! for thee my nights were nights of sleeplessness—my days, days of reverie; to thee I gave the thoughts of my philosophic soul. And how didst thou requite me? With undoubting faith and untiring constancy?—No! On the night of that ever-memorable ball—a ball which still haunts my remembrance as if peopled with spectres

and demons—there flitted before thine inconstant eye that gaudy figure rich indeed in scarlet and embroidery and clanking spurs, but poor, beyond all measure of poverty, in that philosophic refinement which constitutes true wealth. From that moment I was forgotten, and since then a permanent shadow has settled on my soul.

This train of thought naturally made me melancholy; and my spirits were further depressed by a cause which I will now state. At this period I had resolved gradually to wean myself from opium, and, after terrible struggles and enormous sufferings, had succeeded in limiting myself to a pint and a half of laudanum *per diem*. Now on this particular day I had taken only a pint, for the following reason: the druggist with whom I generally dealt had sent me a batch of 144 dozen, in which my experienced palate at once detected adulteration. I had therefore returned it, retaining only a bottle for the day's consumption. With this bottle in my hand I had gone down to the kitchen to speak to my cook-maid, when a family of beggars made their appearance at the door, consisting of a father, mother, and two children. The plaintive tones in which they entreated charity went to my heart. Ye gods! I said, here are people hungry, cold, miserable, craving a morsel of food, while I hold in my hand this bottle, the key of the seventh heaven. Am I justified in withholding the celestial panacea?

Shall I not say, Drink and be happy? In compliance with this natural impulse, I at once gave each of them a glass of laudanum, which they drank in solemn silence and went away. What became of them I cannot say; but as I never heard of any family being poisoned about that time, I conclude they were all confirmed opium-eaters. However, this liberality on my part reduced my dose for that day to about a pint, and I was now beginning to feel the effects of this unusual abstinence: the chief of which effects was of course depression of spirits—gradually my head sank on my bosom. I ceased to respond to Bill's call of "No heeltaps;" the liquor I craved was not the growth of Oporto. It was then that Bill, seeing my condition, but ascribing it to a wrong cause, used this remarkable expression: "He's pretty near done—let's finish him;" and the woman going to a cupboard returned with a bottle, which Bill uncorked, and filling my glass from it, pressed me to drink. Half-absently, I complied: but the moment I put my lips to it I started with joy. Could Bill, then, read my heart?—could he pry into my soul? Why, here was the very potion for which I had been thirsting as never Arab thirsted in the desert, and now (here I sipped again)—it was no mirage, but the divine nectar itself. Tossing off my glass, I at once resumed my wonted cheerfulness.

I noticed that, instead of talking as before, Bill

and the woman now intently watched me (Squabby was by this time very nearly blind-drunk); and my intellect regaining its usual vigorous clearness, I at once perceived that Bill, with what design I knew not, intended to "hocuss" me. The absurdity of an attempt to render *me* insensible with laudanum presented itself so vividly to my mind, that I had much difficulty in preventing myself from exploding in laughter. However, I managed to preserve my gravity, and, entering into the humour of the thing, at once resolved to drink against my entertainer—Laudanum *versus* Port—and thus astonish his debile faculties as Jack did the Giant's in the matter of the hasty-pudding, only that, instead of merely pretending by a mean subterfuge to consume my share, as Jack did, I would drink glass for glass. What a triumph of opium-eating! How would the great Coleridge scowl in envious bitterness of spirit, when he learned that I had achieved a feat which he well knew he never could hope to surpass!

Now then for it! Bill drinks, and offers to fill my glass. I fill it myself, quaff it off, and continue to converse cheerfully. Bill drinks again—I imitate him—Bill stares and looks astounded, but nevertheless continues to drink: so do I. We each stick to our own bottles, the liquor in which grows rapidly lower. Bill gets confused, and is no longer master of his utterance—I become calmer and calmer, and flow on in a rapt strain of eloquence which immea-

surably delights myself. Presently, however, my attention is arrested by a change in Bill's aspect; he has fixed on me a gaze of unutterable malignity. He mutters to the woman, in a thick husky whisper, that "he ain't a-goin' to stand this much longer." In a moment I became alive to the situation I was in. I was in the presence of an exasperated ruffian, who saw in me one who had put him to a considerable expense in wine (to say nothing of the laudanum), and who not only obstinately refused to part with his faculties, but was rapidly reducing his host to a state of intoxication. Affairs became presently more serious, when Squabby, utterly unable to sit upright any longer, suddenly disappeared under the table—when Bill impatiently started up glaring fiercely on me. I instantly summoned my energies to meet the difficulty, and, falling forward with my head on the table, affected to snore heavily. I heard Bill remark that "'twas all right at last, but he believed that 'ere cove was the devil;" when the woman, taking up the candle, opened the door of an inner apartment, and entered, followed by Bill with uncertain steps.

It may easily be imagined that I now lifted up my head, and watched them with intense interest. The room they entered was small, and its only furniture were a bed and a sack. The bed was peculiar, consisting of two thick mattresses, without bed-clothes, and a complication of ropes, pulleys,

and weights. Presently Bill and the woman, each seizing a rope, began pulling, and the upper mattress slowly rose. Heaven and earth! what a thought flashed across my mind! I had heard of such things before—the unhappy being, stupefied by opium, was placed between two mattresses, and smothered so as to produce the appearance of natural death, when his body would be sold to the surgeons! The *sack* was irresistible evidence—it must be so! I was in the company of body-snatchers, and was about to be BURKED!!!

The thrill of horror which now naturally passed through my heart, did not prevent me from seeing the case in all its philosophic bearings. My natural impulse was, of course, self-preservation; but still, as a philosopher, I was bound to consider also the interests of the public. I had every reason to believe that my organs and functions had become so vitiated by the use of opium, as to insure, to him who should lay bare, with scientific knife and anxious inquiry, this earthly tabernacle, the disclosure of the most remarkable phenomena. Had I then, as a citizen, the right to withhold this perishable frame, which would inevitably be dissolved in a few years, and perhaps under far less important conditions (for I might leave off opium, and, thus restoring my body to a healthy condition, render it comparatively valueless), when I might, by submitting to the fate designed for me, remain for

ages, in spirits of wine, a monument of opium-eating? This was one view of the case; but presently, with that clear view of things which the practised metaphysician inevitably acquires, I perceived an objection. I remembered that my body would probably, nay certainly, be sold to some surgeon totally unacquainted with my person and habits, and who would therefore be wholly incompetent to explain the remarkable appearances which dissection would reveal; and the theories broached to account for them, being thus based on mere supposition, might probably perplex science instead of advancing it. This view of the case, coupled with a desire to live my appointed time, decided me, and I took my measures accordingly.

All this time I have left Bill and the woman standing by the fatal bed, where Death so often took his repose, with the ropes in their hands. Fastening them so as to allow the upper mattress to remain uplifted, they turned towards me; but before they did so, and while I was still left in almost complete obscurity, I filled from my bottle of laudanum both their glasses. The perplexity of the woman, and the drunken astonishment of Bill, when, on returning for the supposed insensible victim, they found me seated upright and cheerfully surveying them, have probably never been equalled except in that remarkable passage of the literature of my childhood when Mother Hubbard, having

gone to the undertaker's to buy a coffin for her dog (whom she had every reason to suppose dead), returns, and finds the presumed corpse in a state of cacchination or laughter. They were so astonished that, when I desired them to be seated, they mechanically complied, and, addressing them in a little speech, I proposed the health of the lady as a convivial toast, and tossing off my glass, invited them to pledge me. Totally bewildered they did so, and sat for a time staring at me, while I watched them with calm certainty. Well did I know the train of symptoms by which they who dare to trespass, without due initiation and neophytism, on the imperial domains of opium, approach insensibility. Gradually their muscles relaxed—their heads sank—their inspirations lengthened and deepened—till they sank side by side on the floor, not in the divine dream of the qualified practitioner, but in the dull stagnation of the presumptuous quack.

Having now the field to myself, and my mind being relieved from the sudden strain, I allowed myself to lapse into one of those peculiar and refreshing trances which opium commands. The vision I beheld was no doubt suggested by the events of the evening. Methought that I actually beheld my body laid upon the hateful bed which, uplifted by countless myriads of Squabbies and Long-nosed Bills, was borne through the air, while I, seeming to have a separate existence from the

body (a species of duality I have often observed in these trances), was compelled to follow and observe. After floating apparently for centuries through immeasurable regions of space, the bier was laid in a vast hall surrounded by skeletons, who shouted from their fleshless jaws, in full chorus, as my body was borne in, "Room for the Opium-eater!" and all the echoes answered, "Room for the Opium-eater!"—like the people answering the priest in the service of a cathedral. Then flocked in, in endless procession, all the mighty surgeons and physicians whom the world ever saw, headed by the divine Esculapius in classic robes, and whose ample brows were crowned by a chaplet. Galen followed, and Hippocrates,—and Celsus and the wizard-physician Cornelius Agrippa, and Garth and Harvey and Hunter, with all their contemporaries, till Astley Cooper headed the College of Surgeons of our days. Then the doors were closed with a mighty sound—silence was proclaimed by a herald—and the whole procession, filing past the bier, bowed to it as an army to its warrior-chief. Again the herald proclaimed silence, and the venerable Esculapius, standing forth before all, said, in purest Attic Greek, in solemn tones, "Let us dissect the Opium-eater!" and all answered, "Let us dissect him."

Then the shadow of the great father of physic, approaching with reverence the bier, laid open the temple of the brain, when lo! there straightway

issued forth such a swarm of ideas that the vast hall could not contain them. Upward they floated, bright conceptions, melodious utterances, imperishable images, unutterable thoughts, and thronged the atmosphere from pavement to roof; while still from that small skull flowed the unending stream, like the mighty and fertilising Nile from its fountain-source. Upward still they pressed, till their accumulation grew irresistible—joist and rafter gave way with a crasbing sound (it was the triumph of mind over matter), and forth floated the joyous liberated thoughts to their kindred sky. And all the multitude bowed down and acknowledged the might and majesty of genius.

I know not how long the vision occupied, but when I ceased to dream, the candle was low in the socket, or rather the bottle. My companions were still prostrate, and showed no sign of existence except their heavy stertorous breathing. They might, however, shortly recover, and I therefore resolved to go at once, while they were still insensible to my movements. Hastily finishing the laudanum which remained in the bottle, I took up the candle and proceeded down-stairs.

I think I had got down about ten storeys, when, taking the wrong turn at the foot of the stairs, I opened the door of a room which I found full of lumber and straw. As I turned to leave it, the candle fell from the bottle among the straw, which

was instantly in a flame. If I had raised an alarm, the question of *how I happened to be there?* might have arisen, which I have already said it did not suit me to answer; and if I stayed to attempt to extinguish the flames, I might fail to escape, for the fire spread rapidly. Hastily quitting the scene, I ran down to the level of the street, and slipt silently away in the darkness.

As the wind, rising by degrees, first sports with the dead leaves, then rattles at the casements, till tile and roof-tree go down before the hurricane, so arose the alarm of FIRE. First a watchman shouted—a chance passenger joined him; those who lived on the basements and ground-floors next issued forth, and the chorus surged and swelled into a mighty diapason. Clattering through the streets come the fire-engines on their errand of salvation; beside them run the firemen. Gallant Phoenix, brave Sun!—well done both brigades! But this night your efforts shall be in vain! For see, the flames leap forth at every window! Higher they climb, storey after storey, with rapid step. They lick the walls—they swallow the rafters—and ever still their progress is upward, like bright thoughts pointing heavenward; while the base mortar and stones and clay, falling inward like low material natures trying to smother the light of genius, raise for a moment a dust, which vanishes, leaving the flames brighter than before. Still upward! till now

they have reached the chamber where I passed the night. Bill, my purposed destroyer, where art thou?—where too is thy partner, she who sleeps in thy bosom?—shall she ever again repose there? Ha, Squabby, not all thy gibes and jewellery can avail thee now! See, the fire has encompassed them—see, the shadows, hurrying frantically on the ceiling, show that the floor is in a blaze! And now they rush to the window. Even at this distance I recognise Bill by the length of his nose: he tears the woman from the window and looks down. Shall he leap? No! sixteen storeys is a height to appal the bravest. Destruction in front, destruction in rear! to be roasted or smashed!—dreadful the alternative, William—vain the hope of escape! And now the problem, which he dare not solve for himself, is solved for him. The woman from behind casts her arms about his neck with frantic gesture, and both fall back into the room. Higher rush the rejoicing and victorious flames, arching their crests and crackling joyously, till the walls crumble and sink, burying in their ruins the ashes of the Body-snatchers.

TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

SHAKESPEARE'S FUNERAL.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL E. B. HAMLEY.

[MAGA. APRIL 1873.]

Place.—STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

Time.—THE 25TH OF APRIL 1616.

SCENE I.—*The Taproom of the Falcon Tavern in the High Street, kept by Eleanor Comyng.*

HOSTESS and SLY.

Hostess. Kit Sly, Kit Sly, dost thou hear? There be guests alighting in the yard; run thou and help Robin ostler hold their stirrups, and so do somewhat for the ale thou ne'er pay'st for.

Sly. If I do, wilt thou let this one day slip without rating and prating of thy score that I owe thee?

Hostess. Yea, good Kit, if thou run quickly.

Sly. But wilt thou bid Francis draw me what ale I may chance call for?

Hostess. Nay, that will I not, or thou wouldst empty my great tun. Thou wouldst serve me as thou didst the ale-wife of Wincot,¹ who says, poor soul, that she ne'er had cask in cellar these twelve years but thou wert more fatal to it than a leaking tap. By these ears, I heard her say so when the deputy's men were seizing her goods. Thou shalt not cozen me as thou didst Marian.

Sly. Hold stirrup thyself then. I'll not budge. I'll to sleep again by the chimney till it please God send me drink.

Enter DRAYTON² (*the poet*) and YOUNG RALEIGH³
(*son of Sir Walter*).

Drayton. Sly, said she! Didst thou not hear, Walter, yon varlet's name? but 'twas scarce needful. The sodden face, the shaking nether lip, the

¹ "Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not," says Kit Sly in the "Taming of the Shrew." Wincot is a village about three miles from Stratford.

² Michael Drayton, a Warwickshire poet of great repute in his day, was about a year older than Shakespeare, and had known him long and familiarly.

³ Young Walter Raleigh was Sir Walter's eldest son, and was now twenty-two years old. He accompanied his father, soon after, to South America, as commander of one of the companies that formed the military part of the expedition, to prepare for which was the express condition on which Sir Walter was released from the Tower in January 1616.

eye watery and impudent, the paunch ale-swelled, the doublet liquor-stained, the hat crushed from being much slept in, the apparel ruinous, because the tapster intercepts the fee that should be the tailor's and the cobbler's—hath not the master, without cataloguing one of these things, implied all, in half-a-score of pregnant words, for all the future? What a skill is that can make a poor sot immortal!

Sly. Sot, saidst thou!—but I care not. Will ye stand me, gentles, in a pot of ale?

Raleigh. Wilt thou answer, then, a few questions I would put to thee?

Sly. Ay—but the ale first; and be brief; I love not much question. Say on, and let the world slide.

Raleigh. A pot of ale, drawer, for this worthy man. And now tell me, Sly, is't not thy custom to use that phrase 'let the world slide'?¹

Sly. It may well be; 'tis a maxim I love; 'tis a cure for much. I am cold—let the world slide, for anon I shall be warmer. I am dry—let the world slide, for time will bring ale. I sit, pottle-pot in hand, i' the chimney-nook—let the world slide while I taste it.

Drayton. 'Tis a pretty philosophy, and might serve for greater uses. But, for a further question

¹ A phrase much affected by Sly the Tinker in the prelude to the "Taming of the Shrew."

—Wert thou acquainted with old John Naps of Greece? ¹

Sly. John Naps, quotha! what old John! by Jeronimy, I knew him many a year, mended his pots and helped him empty them. 'A had been a sailor, or to say pirate would be to shoot nearer the clout; when sober his fashion was to say nought, but when drunk his talk was of the things 'a had seen in Greece—whereby they called him Naps of Greece.

Drayton. And didst thou know, too, Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell?

Sly. Yea, as this pot-handle knows these fingers. For Turf, he was deputy-sexton of Wincot, and indeed digged Naps's grave, and was found lying drunk therein, with his spade beside him, at the hour of burial. For Pimpernell, 'twas a half-witted companion, but his grandam kept money in 's purse, and 'a served to pay scores, and 'a could join in a catch on occasion, thof 'a had but a small, cracked voice, and mostly sung his part to psalm-tunes. And now, masters, a question to ye—an ye answer not, faith, I care not—but how should such as ye know Naps and the others?

Drayton. They have been recorded, and thou too,

¹ One of Sly's acquaintances at Wincot.

"Stephen Sly, and Old John Naps of Greece,
And Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell."

—"Taming of the Shrew."

A manuscript memorandum, in which Stephen Sly is mentioned, written at Stratford in 1614, is still extant.

in what will outlast your epitaphs. Doubtless thou hast heard of Master William Shakespeare of New Place.¹

Sly. Heard of him, said he ! Ay, and seen him and talked with him both here and at Wincot when he came thither to his kinsfolk.² By this malt-juice, a merry gentleman, and a free—a should have been a lord, for, look you, to bestow liquor on the thirsty is a lordly fashion, and I have owed him many a skinful. Marry, that tap's dry now.

Drayton. What, knave, hath he found at last that it is more virtuous to forget thee than to countenance thee ?

Sly. Nay, I will say nought in his dispraise ; 'a was good to me, and hath oft spoke with me, and I'll ne'er deny it now's dead and gone. Mayhap ye have come to the burial ?

Drayton. Dead !

Raleigh. Master Shakespeare dead !

Hostess. Oh, masters, he hath spoke the truth, tho' he be no true man ; by these tears, he hath. Master Shakespeare parted o' Tuesday, and he will be buried this dientical day ; the coffin will be brought forth of New Place upon the stroke of two. I have talked with the bearers, and all.

¹ New Place was a large house, with garden attached, in the town of Stratford—built by Sir Hugh Clopton in Henry VII.'s time, and purchased by Shakespeare in 1597.

² The Ardens, Shakespeare's relations by the mother's side, lived in the parish of Wincot.

Raleigh. Thus perish the hopes which drew me to Stratford. I thought to look on the foremost poet of the world—to hear his voice—perchance to be honoured with some discourse of him—and now I shall look but on his coffin. Oh, Master Drayton!

Drayton. We looked not, indeed, for this. 'Tis as if the sun were drawn from the firmament, and had left us to perpetual twilight. The radiant intellect is gone, and hath left but its pale reflection in his works—tho' these shall be immortal. Methinks, in future, the sky will be less blue, the air less warm, the flowers less gay; for I honoured this man more than any, and whate'er I essayed to do 'twas with a secret thought of his judgment over me, as if he had been the conscience of mine intellect.

Hostess. Ye look pale—a cup of sack, sweet sirs; for, ye know, a cheerful cup the heart bears up.

Drayton. Nay, woman, nay.

Hostess. 'Tis of the best, I warrant you; 'tis from the stores of Master Quiney—him that hath married Master Shakespeare's daughter Judith, and he deals in none but the best.

Drayton. 'Tis not sack that will help us. But canst thou tell us, good hostess, aught concerning his end?

Hostess. Yea, well-a-day, that can I, for 'twas Gossip Joan Tisick who goeth out nursing, the same, your worships, that brought young Elizabeth

Hall, his grandchild, into the world, that was sent for to him when 'twas seen which way 'a was likely to go; whereby, she told me thereof yesternight over a cup of ale and sugar with a toasted crab in 't—for, said she, there's none in Stratford, Mistress Comyng, that Master Shakespeare thought more on than you. The doctor, Master Hall, says to her, "Have a care, Joan, of my father-in-law Shakespeare, says he; for 'tis a parlous case, says he; we be all mortal, says he—and the breath goeth when it listeth—therefore keep thou the better watch, for 'tis a man we could ill spare." "Fear not, Master Hall," quoth Joan, "I'll tend him an 'twere his mother." So, o' Tuesday night he said he felt easier, and he bid Mistress Hall and the Doctor that they should leave him and take good rest. And 'a says to Joan, "Art drowsy, good Joan?" Whereupon she made answer, "A little; for I have been up," saith she, "all last night at a labour with Mistress Coney her thirteenth child." "Ay," quoth he, "in thy calling thou seest both ends of life; well, thou shalt sleep to-night, and all night if thou wilt." "Nay, sir," saith Joan, "not so; but your worship being of so good cheer to-night, mayhap if I take a short nap 'twill do no harm." "If thou take a long one, good Joan," said Master Shakespeare, "it matters not, for, I warrant you, I shall take a longer." "It doth me good to hear your worship speak so," says Joan, "for sleep well is

keep well, and a night's rest physics' best"—and so tucks up the bedclothes, and draws the hangings, and leaves him as 'a was closing his eyes. Well, sweet sirs, all the night he lay quiet, and with the dawn Joan peeps me in through the curtains, and there he lay, quiet and smiling—and as the sun rose she peeps me in again and he was still quiet and smiling—and she touched his forehead ;—and he had been lying for hours (so the Doctor said when Joan called him) as dead as his grandam.

Drayton. 'Twas, then, with good heart that this great soul passed to what himself hath called the undiscovered country : of whose inhabitants he must sure take his place among the most illustrious. Thou art sad, Walter—this grief touches thee, and, sooth, it becomes thee well. It bespeaks thy youth generous ; 'tis an assurance that thou hast thy father's spirit, who, great himself, owns near kinship with greatness, and will sorrow for Shakespeare as for a brother.

Raleigh. 'Twas my father's wish, when he knew I was to be thy guest in Warwickshire, that I should pay my duty to Master Shakespeare, for, said he, there is no worthier thing in life than to take note of the greatest of thy companions in earth's pilgrimage ; in them thou seest the quintessence of man's spirit, cleared of the muddy vapours which make common humanity so base and foolish : and this man is of the greatest, a companion indeed

for princes, nay, himself a king, whose kingdom is of the imagination, and therefore boundless. Tell him, Walter, said my father, that in my long captivity¹ I have oft remembered our pleasant encounters at the Mermaid;² tell him, too, that I have solaced mine enforced solitude in the Tower with studying all of his works that have been given to us; and entreat him, in my name, not to leave those plays of his to the chances of the world, as fathers leave their misbegotten children, but to make them truly the heirs of his invention, and to spend on them that paternal care which shall prove them worthy of their source.

Hostess. Please you come in here to the Dolphin chamber, where Master Shakespeare loved to sit.

Raleigh. Well—now we are in it, I find it convenient and well lighted; and yet methinks 'tis but a small one.

Drayton. Ay, but see'st thou that, through the door, one that sits here can mark the whole company of ale-drinkers in the tap-room without, and therefore Shakespeare loved it; here would he sit and note the humours of such guests as yonder Sly. For in such, he would say, you see humanity with its vizard off; and he held that nurture, though it

¹ The twelve years' imprisonment in the Tower to which James I. had consigned him.

² The Mermaid was a tavern in London where Sir Walter had established, before his imprisonment, a club, of which Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and others were members.

oft cherishes a good apprehension, yet as oft doth overlay and smother it. He hath said to me, pointing to the company without, "If you find wit here 'tis the bird's own feather, and no borrowed plume; if you see courtesy 'tis inborn, and will bear the rub; if you note a quaint humour 'tis in the man by the grace of God or the force of circumstance: your weaver or your tinker, whatsoever other gift he hath, hath not the skill to counterfeit, for that comes by art, and leisure, and commerce with men of condition, and desire of their good opinion; wherefore methinks I oft see deeper through your leathern jerkin than your satin doublet."

Hostess. Yea, here would 'a come many a time and oft, with Master Ben, that was full of quips as an egg of meat. "Mistress Quickly!" Ben would say (for so 'a called me, I know not wherefore), "set us in the Dolphin chamber;¹ and let us have a sea-coal fire," 'a would say—"and I will drink none if thou give me not a parcel-gilt goblet," whereby Master Shakespeare would cast at him out of 's eye a merry glint. "Hast thou thy plate yet?" Master Ben would ask me, "and the tapestry of thy dining chambers? Come, let us have Doll Tearsheet meet us at supper." "O Lord, sir," would I say, "I know no Dolls nor Tearsheets neither;" but

¹ For the allusions here made by Master Ben, see the "Second Part of King Henry, IV.," act ii. sc. 1.

'twas a merry man, I warrant you, tho' I did never know what his meaning was.

Drayton. These memories of thine breed but sad mirth in me now.

Hostess. Well-a-day, if there be not Sir Thomas and Master Thynne, rid from Charlecote,¹ and alighting. By your leave, kind sirs, I will go receive them. *[She goes out.]*

Drayton. Dear Walter, this stroke is so sudden that it bewilders me; methinks I am dreaming; I discourse, remember, reason, and so forth, and yet my brain all the while wrapt as in a cerement. Coming here with my thoughts full of him, sitting in this room where he and I have sat so oft, what could seem less strange than that he should enter and greet me; and yet a little word hath made me know that to be impossible for all time.

Raleigh. Ay, sir, amidst my own pain I remember how you have been familiar with that divinest man, and must feel a far deeper sorrow than myself, that know him but in the picture my imagination hath formed; and I perceive by the blank made in mine own present, what a void must be left in yours. Would you have us quit Stratford forthwith?

Drayton. Nay, by no means; let us rather give our sorrow somewhat to feed on; let us fill it with the sad memories that abound here. For, to me,

¹ Charlecote, still the family seat of the Lucys, is some four miles from Stratford.

everything in Stratford speaks of Shakespeare; 'twas here he lived, while that unmatched apprehension was most waxlike to receive impressions, when wonder and observation were quickest in him; and 'twas here he began to fill a storehouse from whence to draw at will. For his manner was always to build on a ground of fact, or, rather, to sow fact like a seed, and let it strike in that rich soil till oftentimes none but himself could tell (even if himself could) what the ripened fruit had sprung from. Sometimes he would limn a man in brief as he saw him, and, again, he would so play with his first notion, dressing it and transforming it, yet ever working even as nature works, that the citizen of Stratford or Warwick would grow into a Roman or ancient Briton, a lover or a king, a conspirator or a jester, compounded part of fact, part of fancy, yet would the morsel of fact leaven the whole with truth.

Raleigh. Was this Sir Thomas Lucy he whom the world calls Justice Shallow?

Drayton. Nay, he hath been dead these many years—this is his son; but the companion that's with him thou mayest have chanced to hear of.

Enter SIR THOMAS LUCY *and* MASTER THYNNE,
in mourning habits.

Hostess. Wilt please you walk this way, Sir Thomas? This chamber is warmer, and the day

is fresh. There be here, sirs, none but these two gentlemen.

Sir Thomas. Master Drayton, as I remember me. You are of our county of Warwickshire, I think, sir?

Drayton. I am so, Sir Thomas, at your service. Give me leave to bring you acquainted with my friend and comrade in travel, Master Walter Raleigh.

Sir Thomas. I salute you, sir. Of the Raleighs of Devonshire, mayhap?

Raleigh. The same, Sir Thomas.

Sir Thomas. An honourable family, sir, and one that hath borne itself among the best these many reigns past. You quarter the arms of Throckmorton, as I think, sir—you bear gules, five fusils, in bend argent, and your cognisance a stag; or is't a martlet?

Raleigh. I knew not we, being but simple gentlemen, and out of favour, were of that mark that our quarterings should be thus well known.

Sir Thomas. I am something of a herald, I would have you know, sir. Methinks 'twere well that men of quality were familiar each with the pretensions of all the rest, making as 'twere one family in condition: thus should we at once know who are of the better, who of the baser sort. And so, sir, of the leisure I spare from mine office as justice of the peace, and from mine own concerns, I give somewhat to heraldry.

Drayton. I perceive by the sad hue of your gar-

ments that you design to be present at Master Shakespeare's funeral.

Sir Thomas. Ay, sir. His son-in-law, Doctor Hall, is our physician at Charlecote, and I have had dealings with himself, and held him in esteem.

Raleigh. 'Tis as it should be—the whole world should honour such worth as his.

Sir Thomas. Nay, good sir, I go not so far with you : though he were indeed so honourable that his neighbours, even of condition, may well accord him a last show of respect.

Drayton. I am glad that the old grudge between Master Shakespeare and Sir Thomas your father holds not in this generation.

Sir Thomas. Why, for that, Master Drayton, in respect of the deer stealing, 'twas not such a matter as is ne'er to be forgiven nor forgotten ; he was but a youth then, and he suffered for't ; and, for the scurril ballad concerning which the rumour went 'twas writ by Shakespeare, why, 'twas none of his.

Drayton. I'll be sworn 'twas not. Know we not the hand of the master better than to take such 'prentice-stuff for his ? As well affirm that a daw's feather may drop from an eagle.

Sir Thomas. Nay, sir, I have better assurance ; he himself, of his own motion, told my father (and hath repeated it to myself) that he ne'er wrote it.

Drayton. He hath told me the same—and for the plays——

Sir Thomas. For the plays wherein 'twas said he drew my father, 'twas idle gossip. How should a Gloucestershire justice, one Shallow (for such I am told is what passes for the portrait), represent Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote in Warwickshire?

Thynne. 'Twas said, too, that he had set me down along with mine uncle. By the mass! I should not care though it had been so; for I saw the play¹ once in London, and Master Slender was a gentleman, and an esquire, and of good means, though the people did laugh, I know not why, at some of his discourse. But he and the rest lived in Harry Fourth's time, 'twas said; and how could I live in Harry Fourth's time that go not back beyond Elizabeth? though the Thynnes were well thought on afore that, look you.

Sir Thomas. Well, sir, I have ne'er seen the play, and love not players. I ever noted that when they came to Stratford there was new business for the justices. The idle sort grew idler—they drew others on to join them that would else have been better conducted—there was less work, more drink, and more disorder. I could never away with the players, sir; and I was heartily with those who were for inhibiting their theatre in Stratford.

Thynne. And I too, Cousin Lucy, I care not for the play, though, good sooth, I liked it well enough. But give me for sport a stage with two good back-

¹ "Merry Wives of Windsor."

sword or quarter-staff men ; or a greased pole with a Gloucester cheese atop ; or a bull-running : but of all sport, by the mass ! I love the bear-garden—man and boy, I ever loved it ; 'tis the rarest sport, in good sooth, now.

Drayton. Methought, Sir Thomas, when you talked of honouring my dear friend, 'twas for his works.

Sir Thomas. Nay, sir, I make no account of his works, and, indeed, know nought of them. He had won a good station, and maintained it, and therefore he should have his due.

Drayton. For his descent, that, as all men know, was not above humble citizen's degree.

Sir Thomas. His mother was an Arden ; and the College granted to his father a coat of arms, a spear or, upon a bend sable, in a field of gold—the crest, a falcon with his wings displayed, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear ; and he might impale with Arden. And the gentleman himself hath for years been of good havings, with lands and houses, and of good repute in all his dealings ; therefore, say I, that we who be neighbours and gentlemen, should have him in respect.

Thynne. Yea, forsooth ! gentlemen should give to other gentlemen (thof they be new-made and quarter not) what countenance they may, for their better advantage, and to maintain them in consideration, look you, and to prosper them ; and therefore 'tis we come to make two at the burial.

Raleigh. O ye gods! this of him that conceived Lear and Othello! Sirs, with your leave we will now bid you farewell.

Sir Thomas. Nay, I pray you that we part not so. I beseech you, Master Raleigh, and you, Master Drayton, that you lie this night at Charlecote. I would have you home to supper, and thank you, too, for your good company.

Thynne. And I, sirs, have a poor house of mine own within these dozen miles, and thof I be not a knight like my cousin Lucy here, yet I can lodge a guest as well as some; now that my mother be dead, I live as befits a gentleman, good sooth, and I would bid you welcome truly, now, and show you a mastiff that hath lost an eye by a bear.

Drayton. Sir, I thank you. For your good kindness, Sir Thomas, we are beholden to you; but, pray you, let us stand excused. Master Raleigh hath business that——

Raleigh. Nay, Master Drayton, that business we had is sadly ended, and our whole journey marred. With your good leave, therefore, I would rejoice that we should take Sir Thomas at his word.

Sir Thomas. By my troth, sirs, I am glad on't, and you shall be heartily welcome. We'll e'en meet here at four o' the clock, and ye shall find wherewithal to bear you and your mails to Charlecote.

Raleigh. Till then, farewell. (*To Drayton as they go out.*) Seest thou not, Master Michael, that to sit in Master Shallow's house, perchance in his very arbour¹—to eat a pippin, maybe, of his own grafting—to look on his effigy, clad as he went to the Court with Falstaff—were a chance that would lead me to journey barefoot in the snow to Charlecote? For being here in the birthplace (alas! now the death-place) of him I so revered, what better tribute can I pay (now that nought but his memory is left for our worship) than, even as thou saidst but now, to trace the begettings of those bright fancies which he hath embalmed for ever?

Drayton. You look on these things, Walter, as I would have you look; a true disciple art thou of him whom we shall always love and always mourn, and gladly will I go with thee to Charlecote. And now, ere we stand by that greedy grave that is presently to swallow so huge a part of what is precious in England, we will see to that other business of thine, the raising of money for thee. 'Tis but a step, as I remember, to Master Sherlock's house. Now I pray thee mark that old man well—and if we deal not with him, as is likely, 'tis no matter, for I can take thee elsewhere; but I would thou shouldst see old Master Sherlock.

¹ See "Second Part of King Henry IV.," act v. sc. 3.

SCENE II.—*Master Sherlock's counting-house. SHERLOCK sitting at his desk in an inner room.*

Enter DRAYTON and RALEIGH.

Drayton (aside to Raleigh). Dost thou not spy in him a likeness to an old spider, black, still, and watchful, and in that money-changing den to a cob-web? There be many flies have suffered loss of wings here.

Raleigh. How old and bent he looks! and, but that he be a money-lender, I should have deemed him poor.

Drayton. Nay, 'tis not a spider of the sleek sort—blood-sucking hath not fattened him as it doth some.

Raleigh. His attire doth not bespeak much wealth. That old gown were dear at two shillings, fur trimmings and all; nay, 'twere a fair price even were the velvet cap and copper spectacles thrown into the bargain.

Drayton. Soft you, he comes.

Sherlock. Sirs, your servant. What would you?

Drayton. Marry this, Master Sherlock—me you remember—Michael Drayton—we have had some small dealings together of yore.

Sherlock. Ay, sir, I forget none who deal with me.

Drayton (aside). Nor they thee, I'll be sworn.
(*To Sherlock.*) But thus it is—my friend here,

Master Raleigh, hath had a manor in Surrey assigned¹ him by his father, Sir Walter, and having pressing need of moneys, inasmuch as he hath been appointed captain in a force which will shortly embark for Guiana, whereof Sir Walter is chief commander, he would raise a sum thereon to furnish him forth.

Sherlock. Be there none in London that would lend him the moneys?

Drayton. Certes; but he goeth now into Devonshire, and his need is pressing.

Sherlock. His need is pressing—well, sir?

Drayton. To which end he would be beholden to you for a present loan.

Sherlock. For a present loan—well, sir?

Drayton (aside to Raleigh). Mark you his manner of speech? 'twas ever thus with him. (*To Sherlock.*) And for security he hath brought the writings pertaining to the estate; till thou canst prove which to be sufficient, myself will be his surety.

Raleigh. These be they.

Sherlock. These parchments, these parchments—ay, ay—Manor of West Horsley²—all these messuages and tenements—ay, ay. Well, sir, time is needed to examine these; what moneys dost thou require?

¹ An estate in Devonshire, thus assigned to him several years before, had been confiscated by James I.

² Sir Walter's second son afterwards lived here, and his arms long remained (perhaps still remain) on the walls.

Raleigh. In brief, four hundred pounds.

Sherlock. Four hundred pounds—well?

Raleigh. If upon inquiry and advice the security satisfy thee, at what rate of usance wilt thou lend me?

Sherlock. Rate of usance?—why, sir, money is hard to come by at this time; we have suffered great fires in our town,¹ and money hath been needed for the rebuilding; the rate hath risen of late—and there is talk of war with Spain, which will raise it further. I must myself borrow ere I lend, and must needs pay roundly. I cannot supply you at a less yearly rate than fifteen in the hundred.

Drayton. Nay, sir, my friend's need is not so great that he should pay so dearly. He laid his account for ten, and by my counsel he will give no more—for, look you, this is no venture, but a surety.

Sherlock. Then, I fear me, we deal not; but I will look into these writings—'tis possible I may be able to lend at fourteen and a half.

Drayton. Put up your papers, Walter, we will make other shift. This was but part of our business in Stratford, Master Sherlock; our intent was to visit your most illustrious townsman, and now, woe the day! we hear he is dead.

¹ There had been a conflagration in Stratford in 1614, which had destroyed a great part of the town.

Sherlock. Ay, who may he be?

Raleigh. Who but Master Shakespeare, for whose burial you will straightway hear the bell toll.

Sherlock. I heard say he was dead.

Raleigh. Didst not know him?

Sherlock. We had dealings together years ago—ay, he hath had money of me more than once or twice; but he consorted with mine enemy, John-a-Combe,¹ and we would none of each other after.

Drayton. I knew not John-a-Combe was the enemy of any man.

Sherlock. He was mine enemy in the sense that he hindered my dealings. This Shakespeare, too, outbid me for the tithes² when they were sold. I had been a richer man had he died a dozen years ago. I spend not, therefore, much sorrow on him.

Raleigh. Why, this comes nigh to blasphemy—let us be gone.

Drayton. Well, God be with you, Master Sherlock,—(*aside*) though I fear that may hardly be. Come, Walter. But, Master Sherlock, a moment, I pray you; I saw your daughter, Mistress Visor, of late.

Sherlock. My daughter, Mistress Visor, ay!

Drayton. A woman, sir, that is held in much

¹ John-a-Combe was a rich banker in Stratford, and a friend of Shakespeare, to whom he left a small legacy.

² Shakespeare invested a considerable sum in a lease of these tithes.

respect, though not for her worldly means. In truth, she hath but a sorry life of it.

Sherlock. She made her own bed when she fled from this house twenty years ago with young Visor. Let her lie on it, and if she find it hard, let her see that she complain not. The curse of disobedience hath been on her.

Drayton. Well, sir, she hath paid for that long ago, if misery may pay it. She looks like one that the world hath done its worst on, and is ready to quit it.

Sherlock. Sir, sir, I had thought you came here on a business matter. I have somewhat pressing to see to.

Drayton. One word, Master Sherlock. Her eldest son, your grandson, is a lad of promise, and for education she hath done what she may for him; but I heard of late that he was driven to hold horses in the market-place, and such chance shifts, for a bare living.

Sherlock. Let his father look to it; he took my daughter—let him look to his son—let him look to his son. (*To Raleigh.*) Will it please you leave the writings?

Drayton. Her daughter, near womanhood, is fair to look on, but——

Sherlock. Hast thou been set on to this? Your pardon if I quit you.

[*Retires into the inner room.*]

Raleigh. Come, let us away. So, I breathe again, now we are quit of that den. I have heard of such flints, but ne'er saw one till now.

Drayton. So thou carest not for his money at fifteen in the hundred?

Raleigh. Were't five I would not deal with him. 'Tis a stone, sure, that hath been cut in human shape and possessed by some vile spirit from the nether world. I almost marvel, Master Michael, that thou broughtst me to him.

Drayton. Why, was it not of our compact that I should show thee some of the models whence our master drew?

Raleigh. Models? how, Sherlock? Yet that name. Soft you, now, soft you! And money-lender, too. And then his daughter—why, Master Michael, 'tis clear as the sun—it runs on all-fours with the devil in the play; and yet, but that thou gav'st me the clue, I might have borrowed money from him twenty years without guessing. Well, this passes!

SCENE III.—*The Churchyard of Stratford.*

A crowd waiting about the gate.

First Woman. Didst not hear say there would be a dole? I see no signs of it.

Second Woman. 'Twas too good to be true; comfort is chary of coming to poor folk.

First Man. I have been here since one o' the clock, and with a toothache, for which thou seest my face is tied up, and the wind is keen. I had stayed within four walls but for the word that went about of a dole.

First Woman. Thou look'st none the comelier, Peter Quince, for the clout about thy yellow chaps, like a blue dish full of butter-milk.

Second Man. Thou shouldst have covered the rest of thy face with it, Peter, then wouldst thou have been fairer to look on than e'er thou wert yet.

Second Woman. I'll warrant thou eatest thy share when thou getst it, crust and all, in despite of thy toothache.

Peter Quince. Look if here be not lame Davy, coming for the sharing; how his crutch thumps in 's haste!—do but mark how he outspeeds blind Harry that feeleth his way by the wall.

Second Man. Ay, and look, Madge, my buxom lass, at what will please thee better, for here come gentlemen of worship.

Madge. The younger is as gallant a youth as e'er I set eyes on.

[*The bell tolls for the funeral.*]

Enter DRAYTON *and* RALEIGH.

Raleigh.

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than ye shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled." ¹

How strange sound these words of his, with that bell for commentary! How his own phrases rise to the lips!

Drayton. Ay, Walter, you shall find but few occasions in life, solemn or merry, regarding which something apt, something that goeth deeper than common to the heart of the matter, hath not been said by him that is now silent.

Raleigh. One that reads him as a student, and lovingly, as my father from my first youth hath taught me to do, and hath moreover a good memory, shall find in him (my father is wont to say) a rich vocabulary. But mark you the crowd here! 'tis the spontaneous respect of the people for so famous a townsman. Now look I to see (what we have not yet seen) the sorrow of Stratford for the loss of her great son. As the sun lights the hovel no less than the palace, so should his fame reach to, and warm, the poorest here.

Drayton. Be not too assured that his fame is of a kind to be felt by such as these, though were he a commander who had brought home a Spanish

¹ The opening lines of Shakespeare's 71st Sonnet.

galleon, or a courtier who had set the fashions at Whitehall, or a foolish lord with fifty retainers at his back, no cap so greasy but it would cover an idolater. But let us mark what passes 'twixt the townsfolk and this old beadle who cometh hither with his older satellite.

Enter a Beadle and Assistant-Beadle with Servants bearing baskets.

Assist.-Beadle. Neighbours, make way, I pray you; stand aside from the gates.

Crowd. The dole, the dole! Good Master Beadle, a word with you—me, sirs, me—look hither, 'tis I, &c.

First Beadle. What a consternation is here! Make not such a clamour. We are charged, I and my partner, with the contribution of this dole, and we will contribute it without respect of persons, save that we will give most to those we think most worthy. Stand you back, Quince and Flute.

Quince. Yet do not overlook me, good Master Beadle.

Flute. Remember me, an't please you, Master Derrick.

Assist. - Beadle. Heard you not what Master Derrick said? Would you set yourselves to teach him in this business?

Beadle. Ay, would they, such is their vanity and their greediness. It might be thought they had

ne'er seen a funeral before. When did any of you know me overlook one that should be remembered? Have I been beadle here forty years for nought?

Assist.-Beadle. Ye dare not say he hath for your lives.

Crowd. The bread! the bread!

Beadle. 'Ods my life, they would tear it out of the baskets, like wolves. Neighbours, though it be customary to give loaves only, yet Master Shakespeare, out of his love for you, and because ye should mourn him fittingly, hath desired that beef should be bestowed along with the bread.

Several. Worthy gentleman!

First Woman. Oh, good soul, this shall profit him, sure, where he's gone.

Second Woman. Nay, I ever said there were none in Stratford more rememberful of the poor than Master Shakespeare.

Assist.-Beadle. Ay, and more than that, there be four firkins of ale to be broached after the burial, behind the church.

Beadle. Neighbour Turgis, wilt thou still go about to forestall me? I was coming to the ale presently, when time fitted. Do thou stand by the baskets and give out the dole as I shall tell thee. Hast thou the bag of groats ready, too?

Assist.-Beadle. Yea, Master Derrick.

[*They distribute the provisions and money.*]

Flute. Shall I not have a loaf and a groat for my

wife? She hath had twins this morning, therefore could not come.

Old Woman. Thy wife, forsooth!—my son hath worked at New Place, and helped to mend the fence i' th' garden last winter, and now is he rheumaticky and bed-rid. A dole for him, I pray you, sweet Master Derrick.

Beadle. Be not too forward, woman; thou art not too well thought on, I warrant thee.

Old Woman. Is acquaintance and service to count for nought?—'tis a shame, then.

Beadle. Quiet thy tongue, mistress; it may be I shall be called on to deal with thee in other fashion than doles. Thou art deputed by many for a witch, let me tell thee; thou art suspect of keeping a toad, and, moreover, 'tis thought thou hast a familiar, one Hopdance.¹ (*To another.*) But wherefore hangst thou back, Cicely Hacket,² thou that wast once a maid-servant at New Place? Press nearer, and hold out thine apron.

Cicely. Oh, sir, I came not here for the dole, but indeed to see the last of him who hath been ever kind to me and mine.

Beadle. The more reason thou shouldst have thy part. Let her do so, Goodman Turgis, for thou knowst that she that humbleth herself should be

¹ "Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two white herrings. Croak not, black angel!" *Edgar (feigning madness)* in "King Lear."

² Cicely Hacket, described by Sly as "the woman's maid of the house," in the "Taming of the Shrew."

exhorted; and 'twere not ill, methinks, if thou gav'st her, moreover, a share for her sick mother. (*Calling through the gate to boys in the churchyard.*) Young fry, wilt thou leave leaping over the grave-stones? else shall my staff and thy backs be better acquainted. I see thee, young Pickbone, drumming with thine heels on Mistress Keech's epithet; come off the stone, or 'twill be worse for thee, thou naughty varlet—and thy tall slip of a sister, too, I saw her but now up with her coats and over the railing of yonder tomb like any stag.

Drayton (to Raleigh). The oldest of these servants that came with the beadles is Shakespeare's own man Adam. I will speak to him. This is a sharp sundering for thee, Adam. Leave thy basket. Step aside, and speak with me of thy good master.

Adam. O Master Drayton, I looked that he should bury me: would I were with him! Were I young, I could ne'er hope to see such another master; and being old, I have no desire but to follow him.

Drayton. Was his sickness sudden?

Adam. Nay, sir,—I have foreboded, this many a day, how 'twas with him. He hath pined and dwindled, and then again he hath mended for a while and would walk abroad; and ever with a kind word and a jest, as was his wont. But I found, from day to day, his step slower, his hand heavier on my shoulder, his breath shorter.

Drayton. Did himself look for his end?

Adam. Ay, sir; but made as though he had a long to-come before him. Four days since ('twas o' Sunday) he said to me, "Adam, I have a fancy about my burial; but say nought of it as yet to my daughter. I have here set down the names of those I desire to bear me to the grave;" which he thereupon read to me, and they are even now in the house, making ready.

Drayton. Some of note and condition, mayhap?

Adam. Not so, not so, not so, Master Drayton; there art thou wide indeed of the mark. Never trod man among men who looked on gentle and simple with a more equal brotherly eye than Master Shakespeare. A fine coat or a ragged jerkin made no more difference in a man, in his eyes, than whether his hair were black or brown. Nay, strange to tell of a man of his gifts, he seemed oft to find as much matter in a fool as in a wise man; he would take pleasure in discoursing with many a one of this town that simple I would have fubbed off as a lackwit. So he saith to me, "First have I set down, to carry the head of my coffin, Hugh Bardolph and Corporal Nym,"¹ poor men, both, Master Drayton. Bardolph, one of many of the name here, was a tapster; Nym, a pensioner of the Earl of Leicester, in whose army he served in the Low Countries, though I did never hear with much credit

¹ See "King Henry V."

Raleigh. Bardolph and Nym! O brave Shakespeare!

Adam. "Next," he saith, "I have set down John Rugby and James Gurney," ancient serving-men, your worships, and now almsmen.

Drayton. Whom in his plays he hath allotted, Rugby to Dr Caius¹——

Raleigh. Gurney to the Lady Falconbridge.²

Adam. "After them Thomas Wart," an old fletcher of this town, sir——

Raleigh. One of Falstaff's ragged recruits he——

Adam. "And Kit Sly. And, to end the company, Snug the joiner,³ and Nick Bottom"—and, the list being thus ended, my dear master laughed so long and so merrily that I cried, "Sure one that can laugh so hath small need to name his bearers."

Raleigh. Truly did he make Romeo say——

"How oft, when men were at the point of death,
Have they been merry!"

Adam. "And be sure, Adam," he said, "that thou have old Derrick, and his ancient comrade Turgis, to give out the dole—and see it be of good kind and plentiful." And he charged me again I should not tell his daughter, Mistress Hall, of these dispositions—for wherefore, said he, should I add a few days, or hours, to her grief?

¹ "Merry Wives of Windsor."

² "King John."

³ "Midsummer Night's Dream."

Drayton. Derrick is now in the sixth age, he is the *slipper'd pantaloon*; and Turgis toucheth on the seventh, that of *second childishness and mere oblivion*,—yet are they still the shadows of that pair whom men shall long smile at.

Beadle. Hath every one his portion?

Assist.-Beadle. Yea, Master Derrick.

Beadle. Then give what's over how you will, and make an end shortly, for we are needed at New Place.

Drayton. Do ye walk in the procession, Master Beadle?

Beadle. Of a surety, worshipful sir. The funeral might as well make shift without the coffin as without me and my partner; we walk before choir and parson, at the head of the train; we be its eyebrows. And, neighbour Turgis, if thou shouldst walk half a foot or so to the rearward of me, 'twould be forgiven thee, for so would the people on both sides the way have me in view; and thou, neighbour, art old—and moreover small—and feeble, moreover—and thy port doth scarce beseem the van of a ceremonial, the gifts for which are, in truth, not given to all.

Assist.-Beadle. I will govern myself as thou desirest, good neighbour.

Adam. I have here herbs, for those who will bear them at the funeral. Will ye have cypress or rosemary, sirs?

Drayton. Thanks, good Adam; we will bear each

a branch of cypress, and will long wear it in our hearts, too.

[*The Beadles and Servants depart for New Place. DRAYTON and RALEIGH pass into the Churchyard.*

Drayton.

"Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth."¹

[*They enter the Church.*

SCENE IV.—*The inside of the Church.*

Raleigh. I have seen many a great cathedral, both in England and abroad, holding the bones of kings and saints and heroes; but never one that enshrines dust so sacred as will this we stand in.

Drayton. 'Tis a fair church, and our poet might find many a less fitting resting-place than amid these pillars and arches, with the splash of Avon for requiem. Yonder, before the altar, yawns the dark portal through which he will pass out of our sphere. (*They approach the grave.*) What a wealth of ripened thought will be summed up here! what a world of promise is the future robbed of! This grave divides us not from one man, but from unnumbered men and women that might have taught and delighted us; it engulfs not one life but a multitude of unacted lives with their passions and

¹ "King Richard II.," act iii. sc. 2.

vicissitudes ; here will pass away not a solitary figure but a pageant. It may be that, so long as Time hath dominion here, he will never spare such another spirit to eternity.

Raleigh. Here doth the poet fulfil the prophecy he made through the mouth of Prospero, that other enchanter :—

“ I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book ! ”

[Chanting heard in the distance.

Drayton. Those choristers tell us that he is on his last journey ; let us go meet the funeral train.

[They pass out into the porch. The Funeral approaches the gate of the Churchyard. The Beadles walk first, the Choristers, in white robes, and the Minister follow, preceding the Coffin ; then the mourners, two and two, each bearing a branch of yew, cypress, or rosemary in one hand, a taper in the other. As the Choristers enter the Churchyard they begin to sing the following:—]

FUNERAL HYMN.

I.

Part of our hearts thou bear'st with thee
To silence and to dust,
Fair hopes that now must withered be,
Unfading love and trust ;

So thou wilt lie not all alone
Beneath thy monumental stone.

II.

No echoes of this fretful world,
No glimmer of the day,
Can reach thee, in thy shroud enfurled,
Thou canst not hear us pray,
Nor seest our tears, nor heed'st our moan,
Beneath thy monumental stone.

III.

The good thou didst thy brother here,
The evil put aside,
The victory gained o'er sloth and fear,
O'er avarice, hate, and pride,
These make the wealth thou still canst own
Above thy monumental stone.

IV.

With these for warrant thou shalt go
Where sorrows enter not ;
Still new thy paths, when here below
Thy sculptured name's forgot,
The roof decayed, the grasses grown
Above thy monumental stone.

Raleigh. Methinks, Master Drayton, these verses
might better befit some good husband and father of

the common sort, than Shakespeare, whose glorious intellect, shining through his works, is his indefeasible title to remembrance. To sing of him thus, is to speak of a falcon and say nought of her wings ; to commend Behemoth for other qualities than his strength ; to sum up Cæsar and forget his universal empire.

Drayton. It is apparent, Walter, that these good citizens believe they have in hand one who differs from them only in that his steps have lain in paths apart from theirs, even as an ostrich differs from a swan in strangeness rather than in excellence. Therefore it may seem to them that this hymn, which hath, doubtless, heralded many an honest alderman to his grave, may also serve very well for Shakespeare.

Raleigh. Tell me of the mourners : who is she that stoops her long hood so low between her taper and her branch of rosemary ?

Drayton. His daughter, Mistress Hall ; beside whom walks her husband. Next, with flushed, tear-bedewed face (yet with a corner of an eye to beholders, methinks) his other and younger daughter, the buxom Judith, married, 'tis two months since, to that comfortable vintner, Master Quiney, who trieth vainly to cover his natural contentment with a decorous mask of woe.

Raleigh. And who handleth his taper and his branch as 'twere a bottle and a glass. Sir Thomas

and Master Thynne I already know, but who are the next?

Drayton. He with the shrowd pale face and bushy eyebrows is Julius Shaw, with whom walks jovial William Reynolds—both friends and neighbours of Shakespeare; and after them come two other of his friends,—Antony Nash, whose face of gloom is the endowment of nature, and lendeth poignancy to his many jests—and Thomas Combe, son of John-a-Combe. The pair that follow are Hamnet and Judith Sadler, the god-parents of Shakespeare's twin-children. And marked you the austere aspect of the minister? he is one of the Puritan sort,¹ much thought of by the Halls, out of favour to whom he comes, doubtless, to do this office. The rest be town dignities, as aldermen and burgesses, and other townsfolk.

[*The Procession passes into the Church, DRAYTON and RALEIGH joining it, and the service begins. After prayers at the grave, the Minister preaches a short Sermon, which ends in this wise :—*]

"So, friends, having essayed to draw from the presence of death in our midst some matter for edification, I will speak a word of this particular brother who hath departed, dwelling, as is at these

¹ Probably the same Preacher who is mentioned in old records of the Stratford Corporation as having been a guest at New Place a year or two before.

seasons the custom, chiefly on what may do him grace, and serve to sweeten his memory in the nostrils of those whom he hath left still in the bonds of the flesh. And, first, of the fountain of his charities—it hath been known in Stratford for a perennial spring, abundant in refreshment to the poor, and in counsel and all good offices to those who needed countenance of another kind; and if (as must be said were a man to speak truly) he ever regarded necessity more than deserving, and inquired not over closely into the way of life of those he relieved—nay, would oftentimes succour and comfort the godless no less than the godly, and bestow his bounty where it was like to be ill-spent—yet is that to be accounted better than the withholding altogether of alms, as some use. Next, of his excellent charity of another sort, I mean the brotherly relation he held with all conditions of men; it hath been noted among you that he, who was used elsewhere to consort with the great, and hath been favoured even of princes, would yet converse with the lowly on a general level of goodwill, as if the only apparel he took thought of were the skin we are all born with; for which, indeed, he had great ensample. And, again, he hath ever gone among his fellows with a cheerful spirit, so that his presence hath been as wine among friends, and as oil among makebates. And though I dare not say that he inclined of preference to the con-

versation of the godly, nor could be counted of the fellowship of saints, nor even a favourer of them, yet have I ever found him apt at serious converse, courteous in bearing, weighty in reply, and of unshakeable serenity when I have adventured to press the truth on him somewhat instantly; inso-much, that I, whose vocation 'tis to battle for the truth, have myself, ere now, been sore put to it to hold mine own, and found me in straits to oppose him, so nimble was his wit; though I doubt not that (the clear right being with me) I should, with time for recollection, have had vouchsafed to me the wherewithal to give him sufficient answer. And it hath, at these times, seemed to me that he was a goodly vessel full of merchandise, yet driven by the wind apart from the port where alone her cargo could be bartered for that which is bread; and I have travailed over him with a sore travail; for I have hardly doubted that, with such gifts, he might, had it been so ordered, have justly aspired to be chief magistrate of your town, or even to serve you in Parliament; or again, with diligent study and prayer, to become a preacher of weight, and have struck in the pulpit a good stroke for God's honour and the devil's discomfiture. But, alas! it is known to all of you, and I dare not dissemble it, that his calling hath been one that delighteth the carnal-minded, and profiteth the idle, and maketh the godly sad of heart; while,

as for his talent, it hath been put out to use where the only return is the praise which fleeteth as the bubble on the stream, and the repute which perisheth as the leaves of autumn ; for the making of rhymes and verses which flatter the ear, and the art of representing the vain shows of things, howe'er skilfully practised (and I profess not to have that acquaintance with the writings called plays, nor poems other than godly hymns, to judge his handiwork), cannot be held profitable for him that writes nor him that hears them. And therefore, whatsoe'er of wit and sense they may contain must be accounted as water poured out on the sand, which, better bestowed, might have solaced the thirsty, and nourished the herbs and the fruits, whereof many would have eaten and been strengthened. But though I may not altogether hold my peace on these matters, yet am I loth to dwell on them at this time ; rather would I point to the hope that our departed brother had, in the soberer life he of late led among you, put aside such toys as unworthy, and given us warrant to forget in him their author, and, moreover, to believe that, had he been spared unto us, he would have removed himself further, year by year, from such vanities and lightnesses of his youth, until, haply, by the example of a godly household, and the ministrations of faithful expounders of God's Word, he should have attained even to the perfect day."

[*The sermon ended, the Coffin is borne to the grave, the Minister and Mourners stand around, the service is concluded, and all depart from the Church.*]

SCENE V.—*The Street near New Place.*

Raleigh (*hastening to rejoin Drayton*). Your pardon, sir, for seeming to forsake you ; I did but stay to throw my branch of cypress into the grave, and have kept only this handful, which I will preserve as a memorial, and make of it an heirloom. But, Master Drayton, I had some ado to refrain from answering that preacher even in the church ; for I have somewhat of my father's bluntness, and cannot abide that folly or conceit, in the guise whether of honesty, or religion, or philosophy, should go unchallenged ; and here was a man who, having the vision of a mole, mistook Parnassus for a mole-hill, and went about to measure it with his ell-wand, and even thought to do men service by persuading them that the golden lights and purple shadows of the mountain, its fountains and dells, the forests that clothe it, the clouds that crown it, and the Muses that make it their haunt, are all vain illusions together.

Drayton. You shall find, Master Walter, as you grow older, that all greatness which is not gross and palpable doth require some keenness of vision to discern it ; therefore doth fame oftentimes grow slowly, and from small beginnings, as when a man

notes, of a sudden, in the else familiar aspect of the heavens, an eclipse or a comet, and others gather to him, till the crowd swells, and the rumour goes abroad of a portent. And thus will it be with the fame of Shakespeare, who had so much in common with common men that they accounted him one of themselves, as Mercury passed among herdsmen for a herdsman, and Apollo among shepherds for a shepherd.

Raleigh. Lo you, where the mourners of his household approach the house. Let us wait here while they enter, and I pray you beguile the minute by telling me of them. Of what fashion is Mistress Hall?

Drayton. Susannah is, from a child, of an earnest nature and a serious wit. Learning little from books, she hath learned much from converse and observation, and so in her hath her father found a companion; somewhat retiring at first, but upon occasion speaking warmly with spirit; devout withal, capable of strict argument for conscience' sake, yet of a becoming humility; so that I have oft thought her father drew the Isabella of "Measure for Measure" from her, she being about twenty years old when 'twas writ; even her who says

"Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good
But graciously to know I am no better."

Raleigh. Is her helpmate worthy of her?

Drayton. A worthy man is Doctor Hall—who consorts with Susannah in piety as in love: one who, next his God and his wife, loveth his most honourable calling, and hath grown to a physician of repute here in Warwickshire, much sought after by great ones of the shire.

Raleigh. Taketh the fair Judith in aught after her father?

Drayton. Hardly, sir; though her twin-brother, Hamnet, who died young, was a child of rare promise. The girl is sprightly, but of small depth or substance, favouring the mother. She might have sat for Anne Page, being about sixteen when her father drew Anne; and she is well-matched with Master Quiney, whose wit o'ertops not hers, who is gay and jovial as becometh a vintner, taking pleasure in what pleases her. Marry, he hath the merit of being the son of her father's old friend Richard Quiney.

Raleigh. Sir, a nobleman might have fittingly found in her a mate, she being Shakespeare's child. But what of the wife who helped him to these daughters?

Drayton. 'Twas Shakespeare's mishap, sir (and I say it for your warning), to wed at an age when the fancy and heat of youth o'ercrow the judgment. He had seen few women, and none of the finest. Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's elder by eight years, was buxom as Judith is now; his fancy

dressed her in qualities not hers ; the secrecy of their meetings lent a flavour of adventure ; and so he became bound to one who matched with him as finch with falcon, in youth a country lass, in age a mere housewife, something fretful, but, in the sum, contented ; and Shakespeare, who was of a temper to fit himself to what is, dwelt with her here in much kindness. But see — Doctor Hall doth await us on the steps of the entrance.

Doctor Hall. Master Drayton, I pray you that you pass not by the house of your departed friend without entering ; I beseech you, sir, you and your friend ;—'twill be a kindness to come in. You shall not be excused, sirs.

SCENE VI.—*A Room in Shakespeare's House.*

DOCTOR HALL, DRAYTON, and RALEIGH.

Doctor Hall. Here, sirs, is my father-in-law's parlour, where he hath mostly abided in this last illness. Be pleased to sit while I fetch my wife, who will part with a few moments of her sorrow in seeing so old a friend. [*He goes out.*]

Raleigh. By Saint George, sir, the poet was bravely lodged ! How rich the staining of this window, where, through the lower panes, we look on the garden ! and above, there stands emblazoned the falcon with his golden spear, steel-pointed, that Sir Thomas told us of. This wainscot, too, is

quaintly carved, and the chimney-front of a rich design. But, soft you now—whose graven portrait is this that hangs in the midst of it? By my troth, 'tis my father's!

Drayton. Ay, Master Raleigh; think not but that the poet, with his wide embrace for his fellow-men, took such merit as Sir Walter's near his soul. The daring that went forth on the unknown deep, the search for El Dorado, the finding of strange lands and stranger peoples, all these fired his fancy. 'Tis to our great mariners we owe the sweet magic of Prospero's isle, the innocence of Miranda, the savageness of Caliban, the witcheries of Ariel.

Raleigh. And above my father's hangs Bacon's; these Shakespeare looked on as he sat by the fire, and thus was homage done both to adventure and to thought. And on this side, engraven like the others, from a painting I have seen, hangs the Earl of Southampton's.

Drayton. Whereby is homage done to friendship; greatly and constantly did the Earl love Shakespeare. And here, when he sat by this window that looks on the garden, he saw on the wall opposite, the presentments of his more level associates—Ben Jonson, Marlow, Beaumont and Fletcher (twinned in one carven oak frame), Spenser, Sidney, and, lo you, mine unworthy self.

Raleigh. But what strange company for such

progeny of the Muse are these others on the opposing wall! Calvin and Knox, Ridley and Jewel, and here, portrayed in chalk by a cunning hand, the divine who preached to us even now. What do these godly men here? Did Shakespeare love them?

Drayton. Shakespeare, Master Walter, looked on Puritan and Prelatist as the wearers of certain garbs hiding men underneath; 'twas concerning the men he chiefly cared to inquire. 'Tis the Doctor and Mistress Hall who have solaced themselves by hanging these here; the Doctor hath long been a chief of that party in Stratford which, though it forsakes not quite the Church, yet holds by that corner of it which is nearest Geneva; and his wife, from her natural bent, leans to the austerer (perchance I should say, the more earnest) side of religion. But Shakespeare, in such matters, would, as Polonius advises, give his ear to all, his voice to few, and tolerated the effigies of these grave divines without any special love for themselves.

Enter DOCTOR HALL, his WIFE, their young daughter ELIZABETH, aged eight, and SHAKESPEARE'S WIDOW.

Mistress Hall. Master Drayton, your pardon yet awhile if I cannot greet you—the seeing of you stirs up thoughts that rob me of all words.

[*She turns aside.*

Mistress Shakespeare. O Master Drayton!—Son

Hall, lead me to my great chair. Oh, what a loss is mine !

Drayton. Your loss is the world's loss, too, good madam.

Mistress Shakespeare. Oh, sir, who will uphold me now, a poor, weak woman ? Mr Shakespeare in his merry mood would say, "Come, thou'lt make a brave widow, Anne—who shall be thy next ?" But Lord, sir, I'll ne'er marry again.

Raleigh. Kings, madam, might be proud of such a predecessor.

Mistress Shakespeare. Kings, sir ! What should kings have to do with me ! You are pleased to jest, young sir ; though kings and queens, too, have looked with favour on Mr Shakespeare. But the funeral, Susannah—was all becoming ? Did the sermon make good mention of my husband ? And the dole—was all the dole given away ? But oh, my poor brain ! Master Drayton and his friend must eat somewhat. There is a stuffed chine. Oh, how he that's gone loved a stuffed chine ! Here be the keys, Elizabeth ; see the chine set forth in the dining chamber.

Drayton. Nay, nay, good madam, think not of us.

Mistress Shakespeare. But ye must eat somewhat, sirs, indeed, now. Daughter, dost know that my new black hood is sewn awry, and I can go not forth till it be straight ? And for drink, sirs, will ye a posset, or sack with sugar ? The wine is from my son Quiney's cellars, and of his choicest.

Drayton. Nay, Mistress Shakespeare, we will rather talk than eat or drink.

Mistress Shakespeare. O Master Michael! seeing thee minds me of my youth, and of Shottery where my husband courted me—the bridge of the stream where he would await me; but I can talk no more—I can but weep. Lead me forth, son Hall. Go not till you have eaten, Master Drayton; do but taste the chine. O sweet husband!

[*The Doctor leads her forth.*

Mistress Hall. Master Drayton, your pardon once again. I feel some shame at being thus o'er-mastered—'tis not meet to let our spirits be held in dominion by a private sorrow—but when I think on him, my heart turns to water. But, Master Drayton, I have marvelled you came not to my father in his sickness.

Drayton. I knew not of it—think you I could have stayed from him? I was far beyond rumour of his condition, and had come now, O heavens! hoping to behold him and listen to him, as of yore.

Mistress Hall. Much and oft hath he talked of you; for it was growing to be his chief pleasure to sit with old friends, or, they absent, to talk of them. His sickness, though it subdued not his spirit, sobered it; his mirth fell to the level of cheerfulness; he was oftener silent and rapt; and oh, sir, though I dare not aver it, I will yet hope that his thoughts were above.

Drayton. Trust me, Mistress Hall, 'twould be a narrower heaven than we should all hope for, where room and gracious welcome were not proclaimed for him. Think you his place can be elsewhere than with the greatest and best that have gone before?

Mistress Hall. Oh, sir, 'tis that troubles me. Hath he not trusted overmuch to that bright intellect? Hath he not been as one that looketh forth from his watch-tower, and beholdeth a fertile land, and a great dominion, and heedeth not that the foundations of the building are of sand? Hath he not—but I will not speak of the thorn that, since he is gone, pricketh me sorer than before. He charged me, Master Michael, that you should see what writings he hath left behind. Would, oh would they had dealt with such things as only are of great price!

Drayton. Wrote he much in these latter days?

Mistress Hall. Yea, often, and would call his pen the sluice without which his thoughts would o'erflow his brain, and perchance drown his wits. But now, sir, I will take you to his own chamber, where I will show you the coffer wherein he kept his writings.

[*DRAYTON follows her out—RALEIGH takes up a book.*

Doctor Hall (returning). Your pardon, sir, for leaving you without company.

Raleigh. Nay, I had the best of company—even

fancies about the great one that so lately dwelt here. Was this book his?

Doctor Hall. Yea, and one of the last he read in.

Raleigh. Right glad am I to hear it—and right proud will my father be to know that the book he wrote in his captivity was of the last studied by the man he hath ever esteemed the most illustrious of this age.

Doctor Hall. Thy father! the History of the World! you are then the son of Sir Walter Raleigh?

Raleigh. Ay, sir, I am but too forward to own that kinship.

Doctor Hall. Sir Walter's health must needs have suffered much wrong from his long imprisonment. I have heard that he hath been mightily shaken of an ague.

Raleigh. Ay, sir, one contracted years ago in the service of our king's famous predecessor.

Doctor Hall. Well is it said, put not your trust in princes. I may tell you, sir, that I do strongly desire to see that time when none shall be so great as to o'ertop the law, and do think it better that the claws of kings should be pared, than that in their breath should lie the liberties of men. But I pray you, sir, hath Sir Walter made trial of the decoction of dittany, or of fumitorie, to correct the malice of this ague? I have made essay of the root satyrion, in like cases, and found his effects to be good.

Raleigh. I doubt not, sir, that all approved remedies have been used by his physicians.—Did Master Shakespeare suffer much pain?

Doctor Hall. His malady was wasting rather than painful, save that toward the last he was oft seized with a panting and passion of the heart which left him very nigh to death, for the which I found the syrup of gilliflower, and flour of marigold, in wine, of much avail; the juice of roses also doth greatly comfort the heart. But of your father. I have ever heard Sir Walter reputed for a gentleman of qualities the most diverse, as skill in war by sea and land, courtiership, and statesmanship, the poet's and the chronicler's art, and in all a master—some of which concern not greatly an obscure physician; but I have also heard that he hath a pretty knowledge of pharmacy.

Raleigh. He hath some skill in simples. But I pray you, tell me somewhat of Master Shakespeare, the hope of seeing whom fetched me hither, and, next to that lost contentment, will be the hearing of him from those he loved. Was not a play called the 'Tempest' (which I have not yet seen imprinted) one of the latest of his works for the theatre?

Doctor Hall. I believe it was. It hath been told me that the famous cordial which bears Sir Walter's name¹ was administered both to the Queen and

¹ A specific, or panacea, well known in that age as *Sir Walter's Cordial*, the ingredients of which are given in the text.

Prince Henry. I have the recipe writ down, but I doubt me whether I have the ingredients in just quantities. Can you advise me of this?

Raleigh. I think my memory may serve me so far. But, sir, 'tis Master Drayton's opinion, as he said but now, that such expeditions by sea as my father hath adventured may have caused conception, in the poet's fancy, of the story of that play.

Doctor Hall. It may be so: 'tis of a shipwreck and an enchanted isle, as I remember me to have heard; good sooth, Master Raleigh, there be so many evils in this world crying for redress, that I bestow not much thought on enchantments, and love-tales, and bygone histories. (*Takes out a memorandum-book.*) First there be, in the cordial, of zedoary and saffron each half a pound.

Raleigh. True, sir. But talked Master Shakespeare greatly of his plays while he was busied in inditing them.

Doctor Hall. Perchance, to others who were poets; but, indeed, my business in life hath so little relation with what he writ that I did not greatly seek his confidence at such times. Now, regarding this recipe—as to the powder of crab's claws, I have set it down at fourteen ounces.

Raleigh. It should be sixteen, sir.

Doctor Hall. Why, there now, see, good youth, what a service you have done me; for just proportion is of the essence of a prescript, and I have

hitherto compounded this rare remedy but imperfectly. Of cinnamon and nutmegs, two ounces,—cloves, one,—cardamoms, half an ounce,—sugar, two ounces.

Raleigh. All these be right.

Doctor Hall. I thank you heartily for your correction in the matter of the crab's claws. I will note it. (*Goes to write at a table.*)

Raleigh (to Elizabeth). Come hither, pretty one, and tell me thy name.

Elizabeth (whispering). My grandfather called me his Queen Bess; and said he would liefer be ruled by me than the older one. (*Aloud.*) Didst thou not say, sir, thou wouldst like to hear of him from those he loved?

Raleigh. Ay, little maid.

Elizabeth. Then thou must talk of him to me, for he hath oft said 'twas me he loved best, and (*weeping*), I shall ne'er be tired talking of him.

Raleigh. Didst often bear him company, Bess?

Elizabeth. Ay, for my father goeth much from home, and when my mother was in her store-closet, or visiting the sick, my grandfather and I kept together, we and our two friends.

Raleigh. Who be they?

Elizabeth. Mopsa is one—this, look you, is Mopsa (*fetching a cat from the hearth*). When I would do her pleasure, I scratch her behind the ear, but my

grandfather would always tickle her under the chin. Her father and mother were fairies.

Raleigh. How can'st thou to know that, Bessie?

Elizabeth. She was left by them one night in the snow, where my grandfather found her, and brought her hither wrapped in his cloak; and he told me all the tale of how she left fairyland—when there is time I'll tell it thee. And our other friend is Bobadil.

Raleigh. Is Bobadil a man?

Elizabeth. Nay, surely you know he is a dog; kind and civil to us, but with other dogs he quarrelleth and growleth, and then flieth from them in fear, loving not to fight. And I have a little horse which grandfather did buy for me, and a riding-coat like the Queen's maids, and, so long as he could, we did ride together.

Raleigh. Well, Elizabeth, I am going presently to the wars, and when I come again thou and I shall be married, shall we not?

Elizabeth. Ay, if my mother will let me, for thou art handsome and kind.

Raleigh. Seest thou this chain round my hat, with the pearl clasp? well, I have kept it for my lady-love, when I should have one—so 'tis yours—look, I clasp it on your neck for a token, and when we are wedded you shall tell me the story of Mopsa.

Elizabeth. Sure, 'tis the prettiest chain. I give

thee for't these four kisses. I will go show it my grandmother.¹ [*She goes out.*]

Raleigh. Methinks, Master Hall, that Elizabeth might serve at a pinch for her grandfather's very faithful chronicler.

Doctor Hall. Ay, sir, better than most; she bore him company ever when he was inditing, and oft at other seasons. For me, I did greatly love and esteem my good father-in-law, and we lived together in pleasant communion; but for the works which, as I have heard, those that make a play-place of this world find such content in, he ever knew that ceaseless warring with the diseases of the bodies, and (what is more) of the souls, of my neighbours, and care for those public matters in which I discern a way to a better condition of the world's affairs, have left me small leisure for fancies to which I am, good sooth, noways affected; therefore he spake not to me of them. But there is one sweet piece of work, of which (not to speak profanely) he was author, that I daily study with reverence and love—and hither it comes.

Re-enter MISTRESS HALL and DRAYTON.

Drayton. I am like the man in the fable who was privileged to look in the cave where a wizzard had

¹ Elizabeth married, at eighteen, Mr Thomas Nash, and secondly, Sir John Barnard, leaving no children by either.

collected the treasures of the earth, and was so dazed that he could neither pouch any, nor even take account of what he saw. Only I know there be there, beside plays already acted though never imprinted, and others of which only false copies have gone abroad, a multitude of uncoined ingots and uncut jewels of thought, which that matchless mind hath thrown off as if in mere exercise and at breathing-time. What measureless delight will these bestow on the world!¹

Mistress Hall. But I know not, sir, if the world shall ever see them. My father gave me no command in that matter, and it may be that I shall serve his memory better with pious men by keeping them private.

Drayton. Trust me, Mistress Hall, the holder of these shall owe a heavy debt to thy father's fame.

Mistress Hall. Nay, sir, what is fame that it must needs be satisfied at all hazards? the bandying of a name from one idle mouth to another!—praise as hollow and unavailing as the night wind sighing o'er an epitaph!—what profit or comfort is in such for the departed?

Raleigh. By heaven, madam, not so!—rather is

¹ Halliwell says, "According to Roberts, two large chests full of Shakespeare's loose papers and manuscripts" (belonging to a baker who had married one of his descendants) "were destroyed in the great fire at Warwick." Falstaff's speech, "I have given them away to bakers' wives, and they have made boulders of them," seems almost prophetic of this.

fame the linking of far-off generations by the common bond of one great name : for the dead, it is a second life among men, in which earthiness is purged away, and what is imperishable tarries—and, for the living, their just inheritance ; so, to defeat Fame is to commit a double, nay, a tenfold wrong. Her trumpet sounds no empty strain ; 'tis the appeal against our baser promptings, the summons to action, the meed of achievement, the celebration on earth of the spirit's triumph over the grave : thus it maketh the music to which mankind do march, and which, silent, would leave them slaves.

Mistress Hall. Your words, young sir, are manly, but I know not if they be godly. Of what avail that men should march, if not heavenward ? How poor be centuries of this fame of yours to one hour of that other life we look for ! Think not, Master Drayton, that I am dull to the spell of my father's verse ; as a maiden it enthralled my fancy and charmed mine ear ; even now could I taste the delights of it ; but I have come to know that in such enchantments lies deadly peril, and I must pass on with my fingers in mine ears. Feeling thus, I know not if, in conscience, I may give a voice to what he hath left, by utterance in books.

Drayton. I will not do battle with these scruples in the hour of your grief, but will trust to the future for overcoming them. Even if no new matter go forth, it were grievous to withhold the true versions

of his plays.¹ Methinks I espy, in the depths of time, his image veiled, and mark the generations of men toiling to unravel his meanings, and piecing out his maimed verses, and elipt fancies, with guess-work; collecting the while, in pain and doubt, what unthreaded memories tradition may preserve of him. And I do fear me, that if some disciple be not found elsewhere, more devoted than any his birthplace affords, to tell posterity what manner of man he was, there may, in a brief space, and ere his fame hath reached its zenith, remain of this chief of English poets nothing but a wondrous name.

[DRAYTON and RALEIGH take their leave, and quit New Place.

SCENE VII.—*The Dolphin Chamber in the Falcon Tavern.* DRAYTON and RALEIGH. *Through the open door, those who were Bearers at the Funeral are seen drinking in the Taproom.*

Enter HOSTESS *with a bottle of sack, glasses, small loaves in a basket, and a plate of anchovies.*

Drayton. This small refection will bring us handsomely to supper with Sir Thomas. So, hostess, now fill to Master Raleigh—and to each a crust. What do these roysterers without?

Hostess. Sir, Master Shakespeare, who was ever

¹ The corrected plays were first published seven years after, in the well-known Folio of 1623.

full of kind thoughts and maleficence, left it in 's testament that the bearers should be entertained at the "Falcon" with cakes and ale after the burial; and in truth, sirs, they have borne themselves like men this hour past; they drink rarely.

Drayton. What a coil the varlets keep! Let us listen to them.

Sly. Well, a health, boys, to Master Shakespeare, wheresome'er he be.

—(*Sings*) *And we'll trowl the brown bowl
 To the health of his—*

Bardolph. Nay, no singing, except any man knoweth a virtuous psalm-tune.

Nym. The fitting humour is—melancholy, and pass the ale.

Sly. Are we to be mute, then, in our drink, like fish?

Bottom. Let us discourse, but no revelry. Let us suit our matter to the occasion, and enjoy the good liquor sadly. Yet, methinks, I could sing something to the purpose.

—(*Sings*) *Out flieth breath,
 In cometh Death
 With his candle, bell, and book—a,
 With his prayer so loud
 And his woollen shroud,
 And his cell in the churchyard-nook—a.*

Sly. A less comfortable song I ne'er listened to. I am of the party of silence rather than this.

Bottom. I can be silent too, an it comes to that, as well as e'er a man of you.

Bardolph. More ale, hostess. What, must I take to my old trade again, and turn tapster?

Wart. Canst thou mind, Rugby, when the play was held in John-a-Combe's great barn at the end of Chapel-lane, many years ago?

Rugby. Ay.

Wart. There was somewhat played then, writ, 'twas said, by Master Shakespeare, that would have served our turn now; something of ghosts and a burial.

Rugby. Was't not the play of *King Hamlet*?

Bottom. Ay, that or else the goodly tragedy of *Makebate*.

Bardolph. To see Master Shakespeare sitting there on the bench nighest the stage, with his daughter, Mistress Quiney that now is, beside him, and to think the play he looked-on at was writ by himself—by heaven! 'twas as a man should say—wonderful.

Wart. I ne'er saw *Makebate*, but I saw another. I was lingering by the play-house door, with Margery my wife one night, thinking to peep at the stage through a chink in the boards, when Master Shakespeare comes me down the lane. "Art for the play, Wart?" quo' he. "Nay, sir," quo' I; "no pay no play, and my pockets are e'en

like Skinflint's pot." "Never stay for that," quo' he ; "thou shalt pass, and Margery too, as freely as coined silver—and I hope, Margery, thou'lt lay the play to heart, for they tell me thou lead'st Wart a terrible life of it." Now, the play, sirs, was of a masterful woman whose goodman got the better of her. Marry, 'twas named—let me see—by the mass, 'twas——

Rugby. Was't not named the *Turning of the Screw*, or some such ?

Several. Ay, 'twas so indeed.

Bottom. Nay, if you are for remembering names, my masters, I am he that can serve your turn. 'Twas named the *Quelling of the Scold*—'twas, as Wart truly said, the history of a crowing hen that had her comb cut, as all such should.

Sly. When wilt cut Goodwife Bottom's, Nick ? Folk say she playeth Chanticleer to thy Partlet.

Bottom. Folk say much, neighbour, that it be-seemeth not a man of sense to hearken to. But touching these plays—I am all for the love passages ; it giveth one, as 'twere, a yearning ; it maketh one feel young again—the billing, now—and the sighing. I have played the lover, neighbours, both on the stage and off it, when my sweet-heart hath borne her most tenderly.

Wart. I also was loved in my youth.

Sly. Thou loved ! was there ne'er a scarecrow in the parish, then, to set heart on ?

Hostess (*entering with fresh ale*). Nay, fub not the goodman so, Christopher—thou art ever girding. I warrant me, neighbour Wart hath had his cooings and his wooings like the rest, and could tickle a maiden's ear as well as another. What! have we not all been young!

Nym. Well, for me, I care not for the love-humours—there is a mawkishness and a queasiness in over-much ogling and lipping. I am for your deadlier humours; give me a murder, now,—or the witches.

Wart. I love the witches, too.

Bardolph. Since ye talk of witches, saw ye Goody Broom at the burial to-day, hanging on the skirts of the crowd, and lurking behind a gravestone, wiping, the while, her old red eyes with the corner of her ragged cloak? I am well persuaded that Master Shakespeare had no truer mourner than that same ancient leman of Lucifer.

Hostess. And well she may, poor soul! Between water and fire there was like to have been soon an end of her, but for Master Shakespeare.

Wart. Well, I was one of those that ducked her i' the pond; and I ran a needle, too, into a mole she had, and she winced not—a sure sign of a witch; but when Master Shakespeare stept forth and bespoke us, I felt I know not how at his words, and made home an 'twere a dog that hath been caught in the larder.

Snug. And when they haled her before the jus-

tices, Sir Thomas was for burning her, had not Master Shakespeare o'erpersuaded him.

Sly. Well, he saved her then, but she may chance have her whiskers singed yet. I am not one that favours witches, any more than our good King, and I shall keep eye on her.

Hostess (entering the Dolphin chamber). Sirs, here be Sir Thomas's men, and the horses, awaiting you in the yard.

Drayton. Thanks, hostess — our score. Now, Walter, set on.

Raleigh (passing into the taproom). Good friends——

Bottom. Hear him ! hear him !

Raleigh. Good friends, all simple as ye sit here, ye have this day done an office that the foremost nobles of England might envy you, and that might make their children's children proud to say—our forefather was one of those who bore Shakespeare to the grave.

Bottom. Sir, we did it passing well, and becomingly, but we boast not of it.

Bardolph. 'Sblood, sir, to be a bearer is no such great matter—and for nobles, why, we have been paid with one each, and are content.

Raleigh. Ay, ye have had greatness so near ye, that ye saw it not—ye are as daws that build in a cathedral and take it for an old wall. But I blame ye not—your betters have seen no clearer. And, now, to show my goodwill for ye, as those whom

Shakespeare hath sometime honoured with a word or look, I will entreat Master Drayton to lodge for me a sum with his friend Master Quiney, which shall suffice to let ye all meet and carouse here once a-month, for a year to come—and each year that I live¹ will I do likewise—and ye shall call it Shakespeare's Holiday.

Bardolph. By heaven ! a most noble gentleman, and of a choice conception.

Nym. This humour likes me passing well.

Sly. I would there were more of your kidney in Stratford.

Bottom. I will invent a new speech every year in your lordship's honour, and every year it shall be more excellent than the last. My masters, let us, all that can stand, attend these gentles to the door.

All. Farewell, gallant sirs

Raleigh and Drayton. Good friends, farewell.

¹ At the close of the following year he was slain, sword in hand, gallantly fighting the Spaniards, on the banks of the Orinoco.

A NIGHT WITH THE VOLUNTEERS OF STRATHKINAHAN.

BY LIEUT.-COL. LAURENCE W. M. LOCKHART.

[MAGA. SEPT. 1869.]

I HAVE the highest respect for the Volunteer movement, and the highest admiration for Volunteers. I think the country owes them an immense debt of gratitude. Perhaps a professional soldier can estimate better than a civilian what the magnitude of the debt really is. He knows how irksome a business it is to reduce one's self to the condition of an automaton, to abandon one's personal identity, to become Number One, Two, or Three in a squad, and to concentrate for hours one's whole intellectual faculties upon the task of instantly adjusting the anguished frame to certain angles, in obedience to the unmelodious shriek of the drill-sergeant.

I can recall no instances of nervous tension so protracted and intense as those under which I suf-

ferred as a recruit officer of her Majesty's Line ; and remembering that ordeal of terror and suffering, I regard the volunteer—the self-immolator—with feelings of profound admiration, sympathy, and astonishment. I look upon his existence as a death-blow to the cynical idea that patriotism has ceased to be ; and if you tell me that the age of chivalry is gone, I point triumphantly to the perspiring legions who offer themselves as willing victims in the dog-days—from morn to noonday bright, from noon to dewy eve, dreeing their self-imposed weird in the grand field-days of Wimbledon Common or the Brighton Downs. The professional soldier, of course, has tangible advantages to gain by submitting himself, soul and body, to the thralldom of military discipline. But the Volunteers ? for what purpose eat they thus the bread of toil ? *Cui bono* this deliberate expense of tissue ?

The only solution I can find is, that these men are patriots.

Of course we are all accustomed to admit this in a general honorary sort of way—indeed it has become one of those standing, after-dinner axioms, like the bravery of the army, or the merits of the Royal Family, which no true Briton would dream of attempting to controvert.

But I regard their patriotism as genuine and remarkable, and therefore worthy of something more than a mere assenting and commonplace admiration ;

and I record my own admiration here specially, and I make these few remarks on this occasion, lest in the following pages I should be suspected of a wish to throw ridicule on an institution so honourable to its members, and so beneficial to the country, which is justly proud of it. It is not to be supposed that such an institution can flourish with equal vigour in every district where it has taken root; and as in certain localities the superior energy and intelligence of the inhabitants will be displayed in this, as in everything else which they take in hand to do, so in others where there is no energy and no intelligence, the Volunteer movement will be stamped with the same backwardness and inefficiency which characterise all the other undertakings of the place.

And if a district happens to be steeped in whisky, as Strathkinahan was (I say *was*, for let us hope the Strath has long ago abjured the deleterious "creature"), why, naturally, its Volunteers, in the infancy of the movement, would be apt to regard the movement as they regarded everything else—from a purely alcoholic point of view.

So much by way of apology or disclaimer. And now to my story.

One autumn day, a good many years ago, I was taking mine ease in mine inn in Edinburgh, when it was announced to me that a visitor, by the name of Captain Cumming, was waiting below. I occupied the interval between the announcement and

his appearance in the room in mentally calling the roll of my acquaintances, but I failed to discover any one answering to this description; nor could I tax myself with knowing any member of the clan. From the Red Comyn who was made "siccar" end of in the olden time, to the Black Cumming who threatens us with the immediate end of Time itself, all the clan Cumming "were to me like shadows." The difficulty was (not immediately) solved by the entrance of Tom Finlayson, not a few years ago my friend and a *ci-devant* subaltern in the —th Hussars.

"Holloa, Peter!" I exclaimed, using his regimental misnomer—which, written in full, was "Blue Peter"—"I'm delighted to see you; and how are you? and what are you? and where are you? and what will you drink? Take a weed, and bring yourself to an anchor; and, by the quality of mercy, let my hand alone, and spare at least my trigger finger;" for Peter was strong in his friendly feelings, and expressed them strongly upon such occasions by collecting one's fingers into a sort of fascine, and then squeezing them with the full power of his vice-like grasp. "But where is your friend?" I went on.

"What friend?" replied Peter.

"Why, Captain Cumming, of course; I suppose he came with you."

"Captain Cumming!" said Peter; "why, hang it!—I'm—you don't mean to say you don't—eh?"

Peter had never been a lucid expositor of his ideas, but there was a haziness about this which led my gaze to his nose, the tints on which had given rise to his sobriquet, and had undoubtedly derived their own origin from habits not unconnected with a rather hurried close of his military career.

Peter, still sensitive about his tints, read my eye like a book, and laid his fingers nervously on the many-coloured feature. "Hang it!" he cried, "don't stare so, and listen to the end of a fellow's sentence. I was going to say that you don't positively assert that you don't know who Captain Cumming is?"

"Yes, I do assert that I know nothing about him."

"Well, he is in this room."

"Oh! is he?" said I, banteringly, now convinced of Peter's melancholy state, but determined to humour him for the sake of the furniture. "Of course—not so bad—ha! ha!—pray introduce me."

"Now then, look here," burst out Peter, "I'm Captain Cumming!"

"Oh! I understand now. All right, Peter; the rose by any other name, &c., and of course I'm safe; but you're not half disguised. Let me recommend a beard, a dark wig, and a lick of flesh-coloured paint on the—you know; and what have you broken for? and where are you off to? in short, let me hear all about it;" and I drew two

chairs to the fire, and prepared to receive in comfort a recital of my friend's pecuniary embarrassments, and his scheme of flight from the Philistine.

"Tut, tut! there's no deception, no mystery; can't you understand? I've changed my name for good and all—got a property by my wife, and taken her name."

I congratulated him heartily on his good fortune, and added, "I suppose the 'Captain' is a little honorary prefix of your own invention, built on the ruins of that cornetcy which——"

"No, it isn't."

"What! did you acquire that by your wife too?"

"No; I'll tell you. You see, though in right of my wife I'm a landed proprietor, the property in question does not yield a very large revenue, and, moreover, what there is of it is a good deal burdened; and so when we went down to take up our abode there, we found it rather difficult to make the ends meet, and therefore, to supplement our income, and give me some occupation at the same time, I accepted the appointment of Adjutant of the 2d Administrative Battalion of Keltshire Volunteers. My property lies in that county, so it suits very well; and that's how I stand before you, transformed from ex-Cornet Tom Finlayson into Captain Cumming."

"And how do you like the work?" I inquired.

"Oh, very well; the colonel does very little, so

I have the corps pretty much in my own hands, and can work out my own system."

This was said with some dignity, and I had much difficulty in repressing a grim smile as I thought of Tom's military antecedents and the system likely to spring from them.

"Nothing like system," he went on. "I carry out old Chalk's —th Hussar system as much as possible. I hated Chalk and he hated me; but I recognise his military talent, and I have made use of him I can tell you; and, though I say it that shouldn't, you'll find few corps that can walk round the 2d Ad. Batt. of the Keltshire Volunteers. I took 'em over, sir, like a lump of clay, and my what-d'ye-call-it hand has moulded them into a—a—moulded them, sir! The worst of the business is that the fellows won't stick to it. You drill them up to the highest pitch of perfection and then they leave you. You never saw such a fickle, captious set of devils as I have to deal with. They're always taking offence—sometimes with their officers, sometimes with me, and very often with my system—and then they resign; so that though the corps is a crack corps, it is a very small one. Three companies have already been broken up, and if another goes, the 2d Ad. Batt. of the Keltshire Volunteers will collapse—the adjutancy will collapse—and Captain Cumming will also collapse financially. Now another company is in a very shaky state, which

makes me horribly anxious and uneasy. It (the shaky company, the Strathkinahan company) has lately been transferred from the Kippershire county corps to ours. Strathkinahan is in our county, but in a part of it which dovetails itself far into Kippershire, so that the men are in feeling rather Kippershire than Keltshire men, more especially that they are all on the property of Lord Worrycow, the great Strathkinahan proprietor. Well, these fellows don't like the transfer, and won't co-operate at all. They lost their captain some time before they joined us, and being ordered to select his successor from our county, they keep shilly-shallying and doing nothing, much provoked thereto (I understand) by their lieutenant and ensign—the one a fellow who distils whisky on a large scale, and the other a sheep farmer who largely consumes it—both, I believe, so thoroughly inefficient, that either the corps will not select them for promotion or they themselves decline to be promoted. I'll be hanged if I know what they want! but the result of it will certainly be, that if they don't get a good captain to keep them together they will fade away like the other three companies, and then good-bye to my appointment.

“Well, I've done what I could by writing threats and remonstrances—all to no purpose; so now I am going down to beat up their quarters in person. I have a man in my eye who would make a first-rate

captain for them; and if I can only get them to elect him, the company will be saved, and so will be my adjutancy; so I am determined that they *shall* elect him, by fair means or foul. Couldn't you make a run down with me, and then come on for a few days to my place and try your hand at grouse-driving? It's a glorious district—splendid scenery, and all that—and I'm sure the natives will amuse you; and then your diplomatic talents might be of immense assistance in helping an old friend out of a difficulty."

I had some ten days at my disposal at the time, so I readily agreed to Tom's request, and the next day saw us *en route* for Strathkinahan.

It will not do, for obvious reasons, to describe too accurately the geographical position of Strathkinahan. Suffice it to say that it lies far away out of the beaten tracks of men, and that he who would behold it must undergo a varied yet tedious journey, with perils by land and perils by water, and the equally important Highland element of whisky. Our journey was performed by almost every possible form of conveyance—railway, steamboat, stage-coach, row-boat, dog-cart, and post-chaise; we employed them all, and I had thus an opportunity of studying, not without interest, the habits of the Celt in a state of locomotion, and of observing how, under his quaint handling, the most modern inventions put on an irresistible air of travesty. On a

Highland railway I saw a solution of the long-vexed question, "How should the guard communicate with the engine-driver?" It was very simple, and consisted in the former functionary pelting the latter with large stones until he was fortunate enough to hit him in some telling place, and work upon his mind through the sufferings of his body. I saw the deficiencies of pressure on the valves of a steamboat-engine supplied by the nether-men of the steerage passengers, who kindly volunteered to perform in turns this interesting duty. And it was not without a tremor that I observed our driver quietly take off his left boot and improvise therefrom a supplement to the drag by wedging it in between the wheel and the worn-out buffer, prior to plunging, at sixteen miles an hour, down a long and dreadfully steep mountain road into the darksome abysses of the "Devil's Glen."

Everything, however—even a Highland journey—must have an end, and at last, amid pelting rain and howling wind, our jaded horses were pulled up in the dark opposite the "Bodach-beg Inn and Hotel."

"Here we are," said Tom; "we are to sleep here, and have our meeting with the corps in the barn behind the house. I wonder if the officers have come; I asked them to dine with us. How infernally dark and quiet it all is! Kick the door, driver, and rouse them up."

A long onslaught by the driver's hoofs on the door produced no effect.

"Break a window," shouted Tom; and the driver, finding no other missile handy, again had recourse to his left boot, which he hurled through a lower pane. This destruction of property at once had the desired effect.

Lights shone in the windows, dogs barked, and at last the door was half opened and a head showed itself warily in the aperture. It was the head of an angry man, and from it proceeded winged words of wrath.

"Gang on! gang on! this meenut; I've tell't ye a'ready there's nae mair whusky in the inns, and if there was, there's nane for a drucken auld carle like you. A Collector! a bonny Collector! I'll collect ye! and it'll be fower and saxpence for the peen o' glass, and if you dinna pay it this meenut ye shall march hame on your hose, for deil a sicht o' yer damned auld brogue shall ye get this nicht without the siller."

"The man's a maniac," cried Tom, springing past me and pouncing on the orator like a tiger, whom throttling, he thrust back into the house. "What in the name of all the whiskies do you mean, you jabbering idiot? Whisky! I don't want any of the abomination. We want the dinner and the rooms and the beds we ordered. Don't you know me—Captain Cumming? I was here

fishing last summer; and didn't you get my letter, you numskull?"

"Captain Cumming! is it you, sir? Wha wad have expectit yer honour at siccan a time o' year? I made sure it was the Collector; he's on the ramble this eight days past, drinking three days here till I pit him oot, and five up i' the bothy, and noo he's hunting for drink heigh and laigh—ragin' like a bear; for he would toom the Spey in spate if it ran wi' Talusker or Glenleevat."

"But my letter, man, my letter? Did you not get it?"

"I got nae letter, sir. Ye see, the postman gaed aff a week sin' to see his freens up Appin way, and there's been nae chance tae get a letter without sending ance errand the fifteen mile. But come in, gentlemen; beds ye shall ha'e and rooms, but for the denner I dinna ken what to say; but I'll speak to the wife." With which he ushered us into a room, fireless and cold, yet stuffy withal, and pregnant with the odours of departed peat and whisky long ago consumed. Leaving his candle, he retired hastily to consult the guidwife upon the serious crisis.

"Well, this is a nice state of things," said Tom; "but I wrote to the Volunteers a fortnight ago, so they must have had time to get their warning before the confounded postman went off for his holiday—fancy a single-handed postman daring to have a holiday!—so we're sure to have them

here; and even if we have a bad dinner and un-
aired rooms, it's only for one night, for we'll get
the business over this evening and be off home to-
morrow morning."

The landlord shortly after returned and told us,
with many apologies, that ham and eggs, a fowl,
and perhaps "a bit braxy" would be our dinner,
assuring us at the same time that his statement
as to the whisky, outside, was only a humane
fiction devised for the Collector's own good, and
that there was an abundance of the best Glenlivet
down below. He added ruefully that "the bodach"
(meaning the Collector) had been lurking about the
premises, and had taken advantage of the tempor-
ary confusion consequent on our arrival to effect
a lodgment in the kitchen, where he was again
"makin' himself most ootrageous," and resisting
all attempts at eviction—physically with his fists,
and morally with the argument that he was there
on military duty.

"Ye see," explained the landlord, "he's in thae
Strathkinahan Volunteers, and bein' 'on the beer,' as
ye may say, he's gotten it into his head that he has
a tryst here this nicht wi' his commandin' offisher
—the Earl, I'm thinkin'—which shows that the
Collector is far through; for when he's in his
ordinary he cares for nane, and wad break tryst
wi' the archangel Gabbriel himsel' if he had the
chance."

A light seemed to break on Tom (who, by the by, had never visited the corps since its incorporation with his battalion). "Who is this Collector?" he inquired.

"Weel, sir, he's no exacklee a Collector himsel', but he aye gets it as a kin' o' title; his fayther aye got it, but I'm thinking it wad be his grandfayther was the Collector."

"And what is his name?"

"Shooliter."

"Shoeleather?"

"Shooliter."

"That's a queer name; I never heard it before."

"It's no exacklee his name jist, but a byname from the bit farm. 'Hamish Shooliter, the Collector,' that's him in full," said the landlord, as if summing up and closing the discussion.

"But he must have a name—a surname I mean," said Tom.

"Weel, I suppose he wull; it'll be Cawmill maist likely."

Tom hurriedly consulted his note-book. "By Jove! just as I expected," he exclaimed; "'Ensign James Campbell, Shooliter Farm, Glencroaky;' why, this beastly Collector is the ensign, and his tryst is to dine with us here to-night!"

"Aweel," said the landlord, "nensign's the word; for he's been aye croonin' to himsel' as if he was discoorsin' with some ither body. He's been aye

sayin' in a fierce voice, 'Nensign! Nensign Hamish! Nensign Shooliter, you're drunk, sir! You're not fit for t' nensign! Shoulder arms and faal oot, Nensign Cawmil!' and then he answers himsel' in a quate fleeching way, 'Jist anither glass o' tuddy afore I fall, my lord; the tuddy's goot; it's easy to tak'. I'm a Collector and a nensign, and anither glass can hairm naither the tane nor the tither.' And aye the fierce voice again, 'Shooliter! attention! to the right half face! to the devil with you, Shooliter! quick march!' And syne he greets."

Tom now shortly explained to the landlord the new position which he occupied to the Volunteers of Strathkinahan—told him of the meeting arranged for that evening, and that the officers were expected to join us at dinner. "The lieutenant," he continued, "is a Mr M'Tavish of Glensnork; do you know him?"

"I ken him weel," replied the landlord; "he was here wi' Shooliter for his first three days, preparing, he aye said, for his 'prospection;' but he wearied o' the Collector, and misca'd the whusky for having nae bite wi' it; sae he gaed aff wi' the doctor to the new inns at Mairdroukit, for a chainge o' scene and speerits; but he'll be here, the corby, when he smells drink for naething."

"And the doctor, he was invited too—do you know anything of him?"

"Fine that—a dacent nice man; he'll be wi'

Glensnorruk, nae doot, and they'll be comin' thegither. If the doctor was to come it'll be a' richt, for he'll baith come himsel' and bring the tither."

I was this day a travelled and a hungry man; it was now past seven o'clock, and I by no means saw the advantage of hanging my dinner-hour on such a vague contingency as the arrival of these worthies, so with some decision I asked Tom, "in how many minutes we should order dinner to be served?"

"Well," said Tom, "I asked these fellows for seven o'clock sharp, but we must give them a little law. The roads are bad, and an engagement in Strathkinahan is different from an engagement in Belgravia; besides, the cooking will take time: we'll give them three-quarters of an hour and then sit down. Dinner at a quarter to eight, landlord—places for five; you must have another fowl and more ham and eggs; and look here, if your friend the Collector has not collected his senses by dinner-time, don't let him come up—d'ye hear?"

"I'll see to him, sir, nae fear; and now I'll show you your rooms, gentlemen."

When I was finishing my toilette Tom appeared. His air was mysterious, and he shut the door carefully.

"You see," he said, "what a queer lot of people I have got to do with here; the chances are we shall have no meeting at all, or if we do, that the

meeting will be, like the 'United Brick Lane Temperance Association,' drunk; but if they *do* come, confound them! drunk or sober, I'll carry my point, and make them elect my man, Sir William M'Vittie—I swear I will. I have had another talk with the landlord, and he now admits that he knows more of the politics of the matter than he pretended at first. They're all dead against the transfer—which, however, is a *fait accompli*—and I suppose they have got it into their woolly brains, that by refusing to elect a Keltshire man as captain, they will prevent the practical working out of the matter. The landlord thinks they'll come, however, for the sake of the liquor—which it appears their late captain used to stand freely—but, being come, will give fair words, and try to evade any decision. But we'll take the fowler in his own gin; and I've been thinking of a dodge, if you'll help me—will you?"

"Of course I will," I replied; "I'll assassinate the Collector, if necessary, or anything."

"Well, then, I'll introduce you to the meeting as a tremendous swell of some sort—something between a Field-Marshal and a Prime Minister, but, above all things, as a special friend and confidant of the Queen's—stay, why shouldn't you be the Inspector-General of the Volunteers? The very thing; so you shall be. When the right moment comes you'll address them; and if, with this hint, you don't carry my point for me, all I can say is,

you've degenerated since the old Newbridge days, when you canvassed two Roman Catholic parishes successfully in the Orange interest as The O'Clancy More. What did it then? why, blarney and poteen. With the Irish Celt these are specifics. Try his Caledonian brother with the same. Of course you'll feel your way and be cautious, and take your time from me. I'm a little nervous about the doctor; we must feel his pulse at dinner, and either make him a conspirator or not, according to his symptoms. Now, let us go down; I'm as hungry as a hunter. Stay, we must christen you first—what are you to be? Not more than a general and a knight, I think, to begin with. We can easily promote you as public enthusiasm warms up. So come along, General Sir Hercules O'Halloran, K.C.B. — that ought to fetch them. You're a trifle young for a colonel even, but you're big and burly, and the doctor's the only one who's the least likely to suspect, and I can tell him, if necessary, that the Queen insisted on your promotion for services at Court. Come on."

We had not been long in the sitting-room when a sound of approaching wheels was heard, and a confused murmur of many voices, and on looking out of the window, we beheld, by the dusky light of a torch, a gig which had drawn up at the door. It contained two human figures, and was surrounded by a crowd of indistinct forms, who had apparently arrived with it.

"The doctor and the lieutenant, of course," said Tom, "thank goodness; and these weird shapes must be the corps: well, they shall have a captain to-night; and now for dinner." He rang the bell, which the landlord answered. "Is that the lieutenant who arrived just now?" inquired Tom.

"It's Glensnorruk himsel', sir, and the doctor wi' him safe enough; and there's a drove o' billies come along wi' them. Maist likely they'll ha'e been waitin' up at the bothy till he cam' by; between oorsel's, I'm thinkin' there's mair gangs on at that bothy than the gauger kens o', but it's no for the like o' me——"

"Oh, hang the bothy! ask the lieutenant and the doctor to come up."

In a few moments we heard a peculiar sound on the wooden stairs—a hurtling, griding, bumping sound—suggesting the idea that some heavy body was being propelled upwards by an agency not altogether successful in resisting the tendency of the said body to gravitate to the bottom of the stairs. Occasional crashes took place, when both appeared to be involved in a common downfall. These crashes were succeeded by guttural sounds of the human voice, which I conjectured to be profane swearing in Gaelic. The ascent was, however, achieved, and there was a repetition of the sounds along the passage leading to our room, alternated with quick whispers of entreaty, expostulation, and

wrath. A heavy bump against our door announced that the expedition, whatever it might be, had arrived. There was a pause. Tom and I looked at each other.

"What the deuce can it be?" he said.

"Somebody very drunk," I replied, "taking care of somebody rather worse; the Collector, for choice."

At this moment the door was slowly opened, and an arm, terminating in a very evil and claw-like hand, was extended into the room, and commenced a sawing vertical action in the air, that might mean deprecation, but was probably the result of heavy leverage going on at some other part of its proprietor's unseen body.

"Come in," cried Tom, "come in;" but the saw only worked more vigorously, and the fingers were clinched as if in intense muscular exertion.

"Stay out, then," shouted Tom, in a rage, whereupon the saw worked for a few strokes with terrific vehemence, and a shoulder and eventually a head made their appearance. The head was a bald head, decorated on either side with a high and tapering horn of black hair; the face was swarthy and dingy, pierced with a pair of Chinese-looking eyes, and corrugated with a wild assortment of smiles, or rather grins, which broke out independently all over the face, cancelling and neutralising the expression of each other in a most puzzling manner.

The arm continued to saw, and the horned head was butted backwards and forwards as if in salutation.

"Mephistopheles!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

"Her name's M'Taveesh, sir—M'Taveesh of Glenschnorruk, sir; Rifled Lifteenant, sir," said the head.

"Oh! Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, "how do you do? I'm glad to see you; won't you come in, though?"

"How doo yew doo? and how are yew? and how doo yew doo?" went the head, as if mechanically repeating some formula.

"Very well, thanks; but come in," said Tom.

"Can't," replied the head.

"What?" said Tom.

"Not able," said the head.

"Why not?" said Tom.

The head tossed one of its horns back indicatively to the door and murmured, "The Collecthur."

"Where?" cried Tom.

"On her ither airm and leg," replied the head.

"Why, damme! he's a regular old man of the sea, this infernal Collector!" shouted Tom.

"Run him in, Mr M'Tavish, and let's see him; give a tug; pull away—all your strength—there!" and the head, followed by its body, shot comet-like into the room and subsided on the floor, leaving behind it, inside the door, and on the perpendicular, an Apparition.

"The Collector!" said M'Tavish, picking himself up, and extending another claw, by way of introduction, in the direction of the new arrival. It was satisfactory to see this historical character at last.

He was a tallish elderly man, with a very red face, a fixed and flaming eye, and white hair, on the top of which was perched, somewhat defiantly, a round drum-shaped boy's cap with a tassel at the side—a head-dress evidently filched from the nursery below.

He wore tartan trousers and a black dress-coat, with what are called "weepers" on the cuffs. On the whole, his appearance was not disappointing. We tried to keep our gravity, and Tom to be courteous.

"How do you do, Mr a—a—Collector?" he said.

The Collector spoke not a word, but elevated his arm with the gesture of a minister bespeaking attention for grace before meat, and remained in this attitude, like the lion rampant in the Scottish shield. I think he had some hazy notion of performing a military salute, but was deterred by considerations of equilibrium.

"Won't you sit down?" said Tom, trying to look as if the attitude of the lion rampant was perfectly normal and expected. There was no answer. The fixed eye had shifted its angle, and glued itself to a bottle of sherry which stood on the table; and

the mind, such as it was, that shone through that eye, was in that bottle and nowhere else.

"Hadn't he better sit down, Tom?" I interposed, treating the Collector as a lay figure.

"Certainly," said Tom.

"Well, then, here goes;" and I poured out a glass of sherry, and advanced towards the Collector. "Take a glass of sherry, ensign?" I said. He shot out the paw to its full extent, and slid one foot forward in my direction. I took a step back, still holding out the shining bait. Out went the paw again, and another shuffling pace was effected; and so on and so on till we got opposite the sofa, when I turned upon him and decanted him into it, giving him the wine by way of reward.

This he devoured, and then letting the glass fall and break on the floor, again, as if nothing had happened, fastened his burning orbs on the bottle. It was evidently fruitless to attempt any conversation with the wretch, so we left him to his contemplation, and Tom turned his attention to Mr M'Tavish.

This gentleman was, no doubt, according to the Strathkinahan standard, very sober. By comparison he certainly was, but I am inclined to think he was indebted for this happy state of things less to personal abstinence than to the quelling influence of two sober Sassenachs, and a certain feeling of being on a superior moral elevation to the Collector.

He stood up with his thumbs stuck into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, his head carried low, as if preparing to butt, and every particular square inch of his visage working with a spasmodic action.

His English was broken and almost unintelligible, and every sentence was preceded, accompanied, and followed by a series of sputterings and hootings which, with the working of his face, I could refer to no mental emotion whatsoever.

Mephistopheles, the Black Dwarf, the Gorilla, Waterton's Nondescript, the laughing hyena, the horned screech-owl, and the vampire, were a few of the ideas instantly suggested by the contemplation of this Highlandman.

"Well, Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, "so you got my letter all right; I suppose you warned the corps, and I hope we shall have a good meeting, and get through our business?"

"Shess, captain — that's adjutant, shess, sir. Letter? shess. Corps come? shess. Business? tit, tit, tit! no business." Then after a pause, and with an insinuating assortment of puckers playing all over his face, "Bheil Gaelig a'gad?"

"What?" said Tom.

"Spoke Gaelic? tit hish!"

"No," said Tom.

"No spokes? ach tit! no spoke Gaelic?"

"But we *have* business, Mr M'Tavish, and very important business too."

"Shess, sir, shess, to be certainly, captain, major, adjutant, but no spokes? none? not a few?"

"Devil a word," said Toni, testily.

"To be surely, tevil a word, ach tit!"

"This is healthy," said Tom, forgetting his manners, and looking round at me with a shrug. The lieutenant also looked at me, and, catching his eye, I thought I read in it symptoms that he might speak better, and stick more to the point if he chose. The instant our eyes met he fired off his "bheil Gaelig a'gad?" at me.

"No," said Tom; "this is a general, and a great friend of the Queen's, and he couldn't think of speaking it."

"Ach! she's a Queen's freend? and no spokes? Queen spoke a few?"

"Not a single one," said Tom; "she'd be ashamed to do it."

"Tit, tit, tit! to be surely, Sassenach Queen—no spoke."

"But about business, Mr M'Tavish——" A diversion in his favour was, however, created by the entrance of the dinner, and a sudden movement on the part of the Collector. He had sat perfectly motionless, and staring at the bottle; but his line of vision being intersected by the waiter, he uttered a low moan, rose from the sofa, and, with a stride and a plunge, made for the door, and lurched out of the room.

In the depths of his drunken Celtic inner-consciousness, the fellow was probably offended.

"Ensign Cawmil—jist a little peety, she's no greatly hersel' the nicht," said the lieutenant. "She's a pretty fellow, ferry pretty, a good offisher, a good ensign—in Gaelic; but the nicht she's no jist hersel'; no, sir, no jist hersel'. But we'll no be angry or quarrel her, no, no; tit, tit! hish!" The last was semi-interrogative, semi-deprecatory.

"Well," said Tom, "I can't say I think it creditable. Being drunk and speechless may make a very excellent officer in Gaelic, but in any other language he would be considered a disgrace to his commission; and when I was only to be here for one night, he might, I think, have contrived to be sober."

"To be surely," replied the lieutenant; "and she'd be trying for four days to do it."

"To do what?"

"To lay the whisky, to be sure."

"To lay it in, I suppose you mean—and he seems to have succeeded to a marvel."

"Ach! no, tit, tit! to lay it, with bitters *and more*."

"Well, hang me if I ever heard such a recipe! more whisky, do you mean?"

"Most certaintlee, bitters and more," in the indignant tone of one who hears an infallible specific for the first time called in question.

The landlord here announced Dr M'Kinlay, and a little, meek, elderly, and, apparently, somewhat sober, man walked into the room.

"How do you do, doctor?" said Tom. "As I had invited the other officers to dine, I took the liberty of asking you to join us as the honorary assistant-surgeon, and I'm delighted to see you."

"Much obliged, sir, and very proud I am to come; it's an honour, sir, to me to make your acquaintance."

"Let me present you," continued Tom, "to Sir Hercules O'Halloran, who has come down to have a look at the Scotch Volunteers." Then, in a whispered aside, "A very eminent man, particular friend of the Queen's; might do you all a deal of service; he reports everything, sir, everything—medical service and all."

"God bless me!" said the unsuspecting doctor; "it's a great honour, Sir Hercules, to see you, and to dine with you makes me very proud indeed. I never expected such a distinction, I'm sure. May I make so bold, Sir Hercules, as to ask how you left her Majesty the Queen?"

Trying to combine the air of camps and courts, I replied, with bland condescension, that my royal mistress was, at the date of my last telegram from Windsor that forenoon, in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits; had lunched in private; was to drive to Eton College for inspecting pur-

poses in the afternoon, "and by this time," looking at my watch, "is entertaining. with her usual condescension, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope's Legate at dinner."

"God bless me!" cried the doctor; "this is wonderful! And you heard all this to-day, Sir Hercules? here, far away in the Highlands? Excuse the freedom, but there's something awful in meeting the like of you, Sir Hercules."

"Oh! I'm a very humble person, doctor; don't imagine" (with great humility) "I'm anybody to be afraid of. Her Majesty is good enough to keep me posted up in her movements. Three telegrams a-day, that's all. There's so much I have to be consulted about, you see; you understand me? eh?"

"Unquestionably, Sir Hercules, of course. It must be a great comfort to her Majesty, although I say it to your face, sir, to have such a fine, affable, pleasant nobleman to consult with; and she'll miss you much, no doubt."

"Tut, tut, doctor, you flatter me, and make a great man of a mere nobody—a poor soldier, sir, nothing more, who is glad to make your acquaintance, doctor."

I concluded with an access of condescension, extending my hand, which the doctor took in a tumult of delight and awe.

Tom warned me by a look not to go too far; but

as he had given me my *rôle*, I was determined to play it for myself. Besides, indeed, the doctor was evidently prepared to swallow anything.

"Now let us sit down to dinner," said Tom. "Sir Hercules, will you kindly face me? Gentlemen, pray be seated. I'm afraid the dinner won't be very choice."

Nor, in truth, was it. He who hath bent his hungry head over dinner in a Highland inn, even in the tourists' season, may remember how much that meal is indebted to the keen mountain air and the appetite with which it is approached; and he may therefore form some idea of a similar banquet out of the season. Fowl there was, but such as reminded one of the feathered spectre which, on arriving at a *dâk* bungalow in India, the traveller inevitably sees led shrieking to the slaughter, to serve as the *pièce de resistance* fifteen minutes after. Eggs were there, but such as "Brother Sam" describes as having been "very nice little eggs six weeks ago;" and as for the ham, it painfully suggested the universal adaptability of the driver's boot.

Our guests, however, seemed to enjoy it thoroughly. The doctor, though perched, timid and bird-like, on the edge of his chair, contrived to play an excellent knife and fork; and the lieutenant, his head almost flush with the table, ate like a ghou, albeit sorely impeded therein by an attempt to

reconcile the normal position of his hands in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, with their duties of wielding knife, fork, and spoon.

I had taken a quiet opportunity of hinting to Tom my suspicion that the lieutenant was hiding his light under a bushel, with a view to evading business; and that if the conversation were to be kept off it for a time, the scoundrel would be found comparatively fluent, especially under the immediate influence of meat and drink. In pursuit of these tactics, therefore, we contrived to make the conversation (if such it could be called) general.

We drew Glensnork on the subject of his farm—the merits of black-faced and white-faced, wool, heather, wintering, turnips, and other congenial topics. He became comparatively lucid, and by degrees, as glass after glass of vitriolic sherry descended, there was no lack of a certain fluency. His English was execrable, but he had plenty of it. The doctor, though penetrated with awe, and sitting, as it were, on the threshold of royalty, nevertheless contrived to chat away pretty freely, and was of considerable service in acting as a sort of jackal to the lieutenant, laying him on to topics on which he had some ideas, and eventually, when the creature passed into the narrative and facetious stage, drawing him out in what he evidently considered his brilliant things. In this way we were favoured with a little episode in his military career

which was clearly held to reflect much credit on the lieutenant's courage and wit.

"When the Queen had a reviews," he said (his use of singulars and plurals was remarkably vague and impartial) "in Edinburgh—— Ferry certaintlee you would be there, general?"

"Oh yes!" I replied; "and I think I remember your face there."

"Most notoriouslee you would be seeing me there. Well, sir, when the Queen had her reviews there, I went to it, with his lordship's regiment—eight hundred ferry beautiful fine fellows—and when we were making the march into the Cannygate, a French Spies keepit walkin' beside us, and lookin' pretty surprised and frightened like. At last the Spies comes to me and says, 'Can these men fight?' says he. And I turned to him, mighty fierce, and says I to the Spies, 'Go away, you tamned ugly teef of a Spies!' says I; 'go and tell your King and your countree not to give them the chance,' and she jist turned aboot and went away with a ferry white face. I put the fear of deeth on to that Spies." This gem he favoured us with three or four times, accompanying it with a great deal of weird laughter.

The doctor then turned the conversation to salmon-fishing; and on my asking how they were off for fish in the river there, he replied, that what with stake-nets at the mouth, and "burning the

water" up above, there was but poor sport to be had.

"Burning the water!" I said; "I thought that had been illegal for long."

"So it has, Sir Hercules; but it's done a good deal for all. Ask Glensnork, Sir Hercules," said the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Deed, doctor, and it's a pretty small quantitee Glensnorruck kens aboot the wather; he never touches it;" a statement which in many senses was no doubt incontrovertible.

"Ah! but your shepherds, your shepherds? I'm afraid they're pretty guilty."

"Hoosh, doctor! not kilty at all; the shepherds be on the hills with the sheeps, and not able to be kilty with the fishes and sawmonts in the wather."

"Well, Glensnorruck, there was Fraser you know——"

"Ach! to be certaintlee, Lauchy Fraser. But who made her kilty? Me, surr—Glensnorruck hersel'—spoke to the Shirra's man and made her kilty."

"Ah! how was that?" said the doctor.

"Well, Lauchy be always makin' his tanned ugly traffics into my house, and always coortin' and coortin' my servant lass for drams and brose, and kissin' and trash. I be findin' him pretty seldom oot o' the house, and quarrelled him. 'Mister Lauchy,' says I, 'be greatlee kind, and

get trams and brose and servant lasses for yoursel', and don't be bringing yourself into my kitchings twice again, you nasty trooper!' says I, 'or maybe there'll be a little more said.' Ferry well, two days afterhin, I be going into my own kitchings to crack wi' Shennet, my own servant lass—shess, sir, my own servant Shennet—and there is my pretty shentleman Lauchy again, wi' a dram in his mooth and a big fishes beside him, coortin' and quarrellin' at Shennet to kettle the fishes for him. 'You plackgard!' says I, 'you vagabones! you are into here again!' 'Plackgard your nanesell, Glenschnorruk,' says he, giving me his peastly tongue. 'Where have you been, you *sloightear*?' says I. 'To the hills and to the sheeps,' says he. 'Did you find that big sawmonts on to the hills among the sheeps?' says I. 'I met her there,' says he. 'Ach! you tamned *breugadair*!' says I; 'I will teach you to come coortin' at Shennet, you teef! you poacher! and to set fire to the wather against the law. Come to Donald, come to the Shirra's man, and get your fishes kettled.' So I handed him and his fishes to the lock-up, and *kettled him*; and it was 'Good-bye, Mr Lauchy; ye've saved Glenschnorruk six months' wage,' which he was awed."

"And where is he now?" I inquired.

"The tevil may ask the questions—in the chails, to be sure."

“And you never paid him?”

“Not a hapnee, the teef! he would have paid the Shirra for the poachin’, and been oot o’ the chails coortin’ again.”

Glensnork was, of course, so much delighted with this splendid illustration of crime, law, and justice, that he repeated it frequently; and the appreciation displayed by his audience bringing him into high good-humour, Tom seized the opportunity of turning the conversation into a business channel.

“Well, M’Tavish,” he said, dinner being now some time over, “I’m very glad to have made your acquaintance in this pleasant sort of way. Here’s to your very good health; and now I think it’s time to discuss the *real business* of the evening.”

“Goot life, captain! business already? You must be ferry heavy on the speerits, if you would be for beginning already,” said the lieutenant. “No, surr; my thanks to you, but not a drop of tuddy till the wine settled herself. It was a mighty fine surprise for Mr Lauchy when she obsairved herself in the lock-up. ‘It will be your fun, Glenschnorruk,’ says she, ‘that——’”

“I beg your pardon,” interrupted Tom; “you misunderstood my meaning; what I wished to express was, that we should lose no time in looking at the concern which has brought us here to-night.”

“Hoosh, captain! you would not be thinkin’ of

that. If the post-boy cannot look at his own horses and his own concern, he must be a ferry poor cratur inteed, and the doctor's powney Callum, she looks at herself. 'It will be your fun, Glenschnorruk,' says Mr Lauchy, 'that you are putting on to my head.' 'My teer goot friend,' says I——"

"You misunderstand me again, Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, firmly. "You must be aware that it is now six months since you lost your captain, and——"

"Six months, captain? will it be six months sin' the cratur died?"

"Six months," said Tom.

"Well, maybe, maybe; oich! oich! six months. Well, well, she was a nice bit cratury. 'Yes, Mr Lauchy,' says I, 'you are ferry right, and you will have——' "

"The devil seize Mr Lauchy!" thundered Tom, in a fury. "I'll tell you what it is, Mr M'Tavish, I have come here to discuss business, and not to waste time, and if you had the proper spirit——"

"Well, well, captain," said the irrepressible, in the tone of one yielding to excessive importunity, "if you must set to the speerits, goot life! let us yoke to them, but be ferry strict with Mr Stew-art to give them out of his own brown pig.¹ As the meenister says, 'Stew-art's pig is like the cask o'

¹ An earthenware vessel called a "grey-beard" in the Lowland dialect, and containing a gallon.

the weedy wummin, with a last drop always into it.' You will ken the meenister, captain?"

Tom's wrath melted away at the peal of laughter with which I greeted the lieutenant's last flank movement; he joined in it, but denied all knowledge of the divine, and outmanœuvred M'Tavish by plunging *in medias res*.

"Now, Mr M'Tavish," he said, "have the goodness to listen without interrupting me. I have come here to-night to see that the corps *does* elect a captain, and I mean to see that it does, and I wish to know if you will support Sir William M'Vittie. The Lord-Lieutenant is anxious that he should be nominated, and, what is more, so is the Queen. You must elect a Keltshire man; he is a Keltshire man, and the best, and indeed the only, man you can get in the district. Now I have said my say; let me hear yours, but let it be to the point. We have had quite enough of Mr Lauchy and his salmon, and I won't listen to another word except on business."

"Ferry well, surr, ferry well; but you will likely be ringin' for Stew-art's pig first?"

"Certainly," said Tom, ringing the bell; "and now go on."

"Ferry well, I was just saying to me ownself and to the Collecthur lately, that it would be incaatious to be in a tremendous hurry aboot the business. 'Collecthur,' says I, 'we cannot

chump over crayt big hetches and titches withoot a look into them.' 'What you say is a true case,' says the Collecthur. 'You are a cliver man, Glenschnorruk,' says he; 'and we must not chump over a captain ferry hostilee.'"

"Well," said Tom, "that's all very true; but I'll be hanged if six months isn't long enough to look at the biggest hedge or ditch that was ever jumped over, and in fact there is to be no more delay in the matter. I tell you I won't stand this humbug any longer, and you mistake your man if you think you can play the fool with me. Will you support Sir William or will you not? and if not, will you propose some one else, in opposition to the Queen's wishes, and the Lord-Lieutenant's and mine?" Tom added, demurely.

"I am sure," said the doctor, on whom the fiery sherry was working its effect perceptibly—"I am sure such a statement would be sufficient for the corps; the Queen's wish and the Lord-Lieutenant's and yours, captain, and I may add yours, Sir Hercules (for of course your feeling will be her Majesty's), would weigh with them against any other suggestion; and I will say this, that if Glensnork were to set himself up in an opposition to these wishes of yours, he would pan himself, pan himself, Sir Hercules, I do assure you."

"I don't doubt it," I said, assuming that the process of "panning" was equivalent to ostracism

in Strathkinahan; "and serve him right too," I added, rather fiercely.

"But he may be sure of this," continued the doctor, "that Strathkinahan will refuse to be panned with him."

"Hoosh, doctor!" said the lieutenant, whose normal attitude towards the doctor was that of an honoured patron evidently; "you are a ferry cliver man, but you are incautions to speak when you are not asked to spoke. Ailsie M'Leod is in crayt trouble with her tooth-gums; you had petter" (with a dignified wave) "go and make them heal—tit, tit!"

"The opinion of a sober professional man," cried the doctor, in high wrath, "is at least as valuable as that of a being who forgets himself daily with the bottle."

"Deed, doctor, he'll be a ferry smart man that forgets the pottle when you are into the room. Go away—go and sing a song to Ailsie's tooth-gums."

"Come, come, gentlemen," cried Tom, as the doctor was bursting out in huge wrath at this *tu quoque*, "we are forgetting ourselves; to business, business, business. What do you say, Mr M'Tavish—will you support Sir William?"

"Well, well, Sir William is a fine man, a ferry fine nice nobleman; but, for God's sake, captain, is Stew-art niver bringing his pig?"

"Oh yes! this will bring him" (ringing the bell); "and now go on, for heaven's sake!"

A diversion was, however, again created in the lieutenant's favour by the entrance of the landlord, who informed us that the corps had been for a considerable time awaiting us in the barn, and were beginning to get a "little troublesome;" and as it appeared to Tom and myself that perhaps more might be done by a direct appeal to the whole body than by fencing with their impracticable officer, we decided to descend at once.

A strange scene presented itself to our eyes as we entered the barn. It was dimly lighted by a few tallow candles stuck into bottles, and by a stable-lantern suspended from a crossbeam in the centre. A heavy cloud of tobacco-smoke brooded over all, through which were hazily revealed the figures of the Volunteers. We had a dim panorama of shaggy crests of hair, of red faces, of tobacco-pipes, and of all manner of improvised drinking-vessels; while the hum of many voices, the puffing of many pipes, and the glugging of lips that drank greedily, were the sounds that met our ears. When our entrance was observed, suddenly uprose from the mist the form of a tall man with an outstretched arm, and from his lips proceeded a sound much resembling an ill-executed sneeze—"Att-itshun!" The form and the voice were those of the Collector, who seemed to have partially succeeded in "laying

the spirit," and who now, in the exercise of his military function, was calling the room to "attention."

The men all rose, looking like the peaks of hills appearing above the morning mist.

"Saloot!" cried the Collector, still favouring the attitude of the lion rampant; whereupon the corps all began to make what looked like mesmeric passes with their right arms in the air. "Dooble saloot!" shouted the Collector again; and then each man employed his left arm also, which gave the pleasing general effect of about fifty men swimming for their lives in an ocean of tobacco-smoke. This movement had for me such a delightful novelty that I could not help remarking on it to the lieutenant, who explained with great pride that it was an invention of his own devised to meet a difficulty he had felt in receiving merely the same salute as the Collector. "So I doobled it for my nanesel"; and if the craturs had more airms, they would use plenty more of them for the captain and yoursel."

Tom now told the lieutenant that he would like to see the company fallen in in their ranks for a minute or two, just to get an idea of the general appearance of the men.

"Would you put the craturs into rangks withoot their sojer's clothes on, captain? and without their guns? Tit, tit! begging your grace, that would be a ferry fulish-like trick, to be sure."

"I don't want to see their clothing or their rifles;

I want to see the men themselves. Have the goodness to fall them in," said Tom, firmly, "and get them into single rank."

"Ferry goot, ferry well," said the lieutenant, with a shrug. "Shooliter, be craytly kind and put the cratur's into a single rank." The Collector had, however, apparently succumbed to his old enemy again, for he only waved his arm feebly, and muttered, with a sort of imbecile snigger, "She kens naething about it."

"Very well," said Tom, "I'll do it myself; give me a sergeant."

"Is there a sergeant among ye?" cried M'Tavish.

"No," shouted the collective voice of Strathkinahan from the mist.

"Very well, a corporal will do," said Tom.

"Is Corporal M'Ildhu thereabouts?" inquired M'Tavish, peering into the haze.

"He's at the bothy," shouted a score of voices.

"Why did he not take heed to come doon?" said the lieutenant.

"He had words wi' the Collector," explained the chorus again.

"Well, well, that's a peety—a sore peety—and the captain here and all."

I understood the chorus to admit, by a sort of rumbling growl, that it *was* a pity.

"Well, never mind," said Tom; "give me a 'coverer' of some sort, and we'll get on."

"Deed, and it's a thing the corps never had, captain. There was a taak of sairvin' them oot at our own costs; and they would be ferry goot in the wat nights if they were happenin' to be M'Intosh's clothes, and cheap."

"Isn't this nice?" said Tom, grimly, looking round at me. "Give me your right-hand man, then; I suppose the company has a right and a left?"

"Shess, sir! most notoriouslee, most certaintlee. Hand me oot the richt-hand man," he cried into the mist.

"She is not into here," replied the chorus.

"Who is she then, at all?" cried the lieutenant.

"Lauchy Fraser," shouted the chorus, with a roar of laughter.

"Ach! deed, and it is trooth," cried the lieutenant, heartily joining in the mirth; "she is on a veesit to the shirra;" whereupon there was another roar, which put Tom quite out of temper, and he pounced personally into the mist, and seizing the first man he found there, stood him up against the wall.

"This is the right-hand man," he said; "and now come on, all the rest of you, and fall in." And what with the doctor's assistance and mine, he at length contrived to get them into a row against the wall, all continuing to smoke their pipes and to retain their drinking-vessels in their hands. Tom winked

at these delinquencies, however, for the purpose, as he explained to me after, of keeping them in good-humour and carrying his point. "Now, Mr M'Tavish, take command of them ; and if your ensign can stand, which seems doubtful, he may as well take his place—it may keep him out of mischief, at least."

"I am to command them, captain?"

"If you please, Mr M'Tavish."

The lieutenant waddled out in front of the line, his hands in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, his head low, and shooting backwards and forwards, like a large gander waddling heavily to a pond, while from his lips came a sort of preliminary hissing, also suggestive of that bird. The hissing gradually "boiled up," so to speak, till it bubbled into a cry of "Oarter arrums !" whereupon the men gave an apologetic plunge in their ranks, apparently to imply that if they had the means, the lieutenant's wish would be cheerfully complied with.

"Tut, tut ! Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, struggling between laughter and indignation, "I don't mean that ; take command in the regular way."

"Shoolter arrums !" shouted the bewildered lieutenant, and again the corps executed a sort of *pas d'extase*.

"Fall in on the right, Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, with a desperate effort to keep his countenance ; "and, for the love of heaven, take your hands out of your waistcoat, and hold up your head, and try

to look like a reasonable being for three minutes!" he added, as the lieutenant moved sulkily to his position.

The arrangements being at last completed, including the position of the Collector, who, by way of compromise, was accommodated with a stool on the left flank, Tom and I walked slowly down the rank and inspected the men. They were a fine set of fellows, certainly—tall, sinewy, broad-shouldered, and athletic-looking. Many, indeed, bore very unequivocal traces of the manner in which they had occupied their time at "the bothy;" but there was no disgraceful case like that of the Collector, the intermittent nature of whose inebriety made it difficult to deal with on any uniform system. The men, as a rule, stood steadily enough in the ranks, though in one or two exceptional cases an attempt was made to shake hands with the inspecting officer as he passed.

"Gentlemen," said Tom, when the inspection was completed, "I have to congratulate you on your fine, I may say your soldier-like, appearance. I have often heard of the fine *physique* you have in this district——" ("It could not have been the feesick of Dr M'Kinlay," interpolated M'Tavish, still ranking at his medical friend), "and I am not disappointed. A fine *physique*, and the mental intelligence which you evidently possess, are immense advantages; but they must be properly applied,

and there are two things that can alone compass this end—drill and discipline. As it is with the regular, so it is with the volunteer soldier. I am sorry to find, with regard to the first, that you have been unfortunate in losing your drill-sergeant; but I am now making arrangements to supply his place. With regard to the second, the grand essential is, that the corps should be fully and efficiently officered; above all things, that there should be at its head a competent captain—a man of intelligence, energy, and, I may add, social position. A long period has elapsed since the death of your late captain, and no step has been taken to elect and nominate his successor to the Lord-Lieutenant. I have made frequent representations to your officers on this score, but without any result. I have therefore personally visited you for the double purpose of inspecting the corps, and of impressing upon you all the necessity of at once proceeding to elect a captain. When I say that *I* am inspecting the corps, I do not speak correctly, for I am in reality on this occasion only the attendant of the distinguished General Sir Hercules O'Halloran, who, in his capacity of Inspector-General of Reserves, does you the honour of being present here to-night, and may not improbably feel himself called upon to address a few words of advice to you on the subject I have been insisting upon. When I mention that Sir Hercules, in addition to his great military distinc-

tion, is so highly honoured as to be the confidential adviser of our beloved Sovereign, you will, I am sure, concur with me in the propriety of at once giving three cheers for that eminent officer. Hip! hip! hip! hurrah!" The cheers were given with right goodwill, till roof and rafters rang; and then Tom gravely continued his oration: "The Lord-Lieutenant will not appoint a gentleman to that position without your nomination, and I must tell you that he is not a little surprised and disappointed at the delay which has taken place. It would not be right for me to conceal from you, and I have Sir Hercules's sanction to mention, that pain and surprise have also been excited in far more august quarters, by what he has felt himself compelled to stigmatise as 'this unseemly tardiness;' but tonight I am confident this stigma will be removed, and I now propose that we proceed at once to elect a gentleman to the vacant position. I will not trouble you to stand in the ranks while this goes on; but I earnestly request you to sit down in an orderly manner, and discuss the matter in a business-like way. To the right face! Break off!" The men tumbled out of their ranks, and reseated themselves on the benches; the Collector obeyed the order by turning a back somersault off his stool; and the lieutenant waddled back into civil life much relieved, to lay aside the crown of office. "Now," said Tom, "let us discuss the matter quietly. I

say Sir William M'Vittie is our best man, and that we ought to elect him at once. Light your pipe, M'Tavish, and give us your opinion."

"Sir William is no doot a ferry fine, nice, partee-
cular, pretty fellow, captain," said the lieutenant,
emphasising each epithet with a draw at his pipe,
in which an inordinate amount of suctional power
was employed; "but if a captain is to be aal the
goot things that you have spoke into your bit
speech, Sir William will not be our man."

"How d'ye mean?" inquired Tom.

"Angus M'Rioch, will you be craytly kind, and
tell the captain whether Sir William is for the dip-
ping or for the smearing of the sheeps?" said the
lieutenant, in a voice of the deepest solemnity.

"Dipping!" bellowed the whole room as one
man.

"Ferry well, captain, you will not, after that,
again be speaking for Sir William," said M'Tavish,
with the air of one who has got rid of the first of a
series of difficulties, and proceeds to handle the next,
confident of success.

"But I don't see what that has got to do with
the question," urged Tom. "As he has neither got
to dip nor smear the Volunteers, I don't think it
matters what he does with his sheep."

"There niver was a yowe, there niver was a tupp,
there niver was a wedder dipped yet at aal on to the
holdings of my father's son; there niver will be a

yowe, there niver will be a tupp, there niver will be a wedder dipped on to his holdings," said a lantern-jawed old fellow in a sort of chant; and the somewhat irrelevant statement was received with much applause, and evidently held to strengthen the case against Sir William.

"What would the old red man, Colin-with-the-crooked-nose, have said to all the dippings and the trash, Angus?" inquired another anti-Sir Williamite; but the Nestor only smoked with ineffable grimness. He had uttered, and that, he evidently thought, should settle the matter without further parley.

"There was once a pollis-offisher, by the name of M'Ardle, in the Strath," suggested another of the party, "but he is not into it now. Will somebody be ferry kind, and say who pit him oot?"

"Sir William!" cried a dozen voices.

"I suppose a pollis-offisher is to have no mouth into this Strath," observed a gentleman largely provided in respect of that feature, and with complexional indications that neither in eating nor in speaking was it principally employed.

"M'Ardle was not a drucken man," hiccoughed the Collector. "He tasted—at a time—like me; it was his dewty—Sir William pit him oot for—for his dewty. His name was Peter." And much honour was done to these decidedly hazy propositions.

"If Sir William is to be captain in the Strath, the Volunteers may ferry quickly put their mouths into the store wi' the guns, and not bring them oot again," suggested another satirist.

"After the shearin', when the ball was in the barn at Craig-Vittie, there was plenty of tea, but I did not obsairve anything for a man-body to drink," said another.

"If Sir William is to be captain, he will have to list the auld wives into the company. Betty M'Candlish will make a ferry parteecular fine lieutenant to him, and Ailsie M'Leod will be ensign instead of the Collector."

"Sir William is a temperanst man at his heart."

"And a temperanst man is a teirant."

"And we will have no teirants and no teiranny here."

Loud applause followed these heroic sentiments, and the lieutenant, turning to Tom, observed, "You see, captain, Sir William is a parteecular nice goot nobleman, but the Volunteers will not be for having a teirant for their captain."

"But there is no one else in the district you can elect, and as you must elect some one, why, you must elect Sir William. It's all nonsense about tyranny. Sir William is an excellent man, and no more a teetotaller than I am, though, of course, he doesn't think that every parade is to be turned into a drinking bout. When you know him better, when

he is mixed up with you as your captain, you will find all these things you've been hearing about him are nonsense, and I hear he is going to reside regularly at Craig-Vittie."

"If I might make bold to say a word," said a diplomatist, whose opinion was evidently held in high esteem, "I would say this, that if we must elect a captain, we must elect him; but if there is no one into the Strath who is shootable for the posection, then, for Got's sake, let us not at aal forget that there is other places with shootable people into them. We will elect some ferry crayt man; we will elect the Prince of Whales. He will be captain to the company; but we will not be troubling him, and he will not be troubling himself to come down to the Strath for the dreels; and so we will have a captain and no teiranny."

This novel method of solving the difficulty found universal favour; and M'Tavish at once abandoned his Fabian policy, and became clamorous for instant action as to the Prince's election.

Tom took me out of the room for consultation. "Did you ever see such an impracticable set of devils?" he said. "What's to be done?"

"Arguing won't mend matters, that's clear," I replied. "Give me some particulars about this Sir William, and I'll see what I can do." Tom did so, and I learned that Sir William had quite recently succeeded to the property; that he had lived prin-

cipally abroad in the diplomatic service, and was as yet almost unknown in the Strath; but that he was about to settle on his acres, and that his co-operation and assistance would be of the greatest importance in saving the Volunteer movement in the locality from death by alcoholic drowning. He was reported to be a very sensible man; and though neither the tyrant nor the ascetic he was alleged to be by the corps, he had, on a recent short visit to the Strath, been not a little startled and scandalised at the extraordinary chronic state of fuddlement in which its inhabitants lived, and had expressed himself pretty broadly on the subject, and, in one or two instances, made a clearance of the most inveterate offenders. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.* "In fact," Tom concluded, "he is just the man to keep these dipso-maniacs in order; and I know he will accept, if he is elected."

"Very well," said I, "you had better let me speak to them. Just say that 'the General' will address a few observations to the corps."

When we returned to the meeting we found that they had just elected the Prince of Wales *nem. con.*, and were expecting with flaming eyes the arrival of the "glasses round" with which the lieutenant had suggested they should celebrate the event "at their own costs."

Three cheers for "our captain, the Prince," were given somewhat defiantly on our entrance; and, on

the whole, matters bore a decidedly unsatisfactory aspect.

"Gentlemen," cried Tom, "Lieutenant-General Sir Hercules O'Halloran, K.C.B., Inspector of the Reserve Forces, will address you;" and I stepped forward, desperately determined that if unscrupulous impudence could avert the collapse of the Keltshire "Ad. Batt." and the loss of my friend Tom's appointment, it should not be wanting to me on this occasion.

"Gentlemen," I said, "first of all I must express to you, as representing the Royal Family, my very sincere thanks for the honour which you have so loyally and so very properly bestowed upon us—I mean, upon the Prince of Wales. Gentlemen, you have done honour to yourselves in honouring him—(cheers)—and before I go further I beg that you will allow me, on behalf of the Queen, to defray the expense of the farther honour which you propose to offer him in drinking his health." (Loud and protracted cheering, during which I tried to look as if the Privy purse was at that moment in my portmanteau up-stairs.) "But having said thus much, it deeply grieves me to add that duty and my instructions compel me to decline, with every expression of gratitude, the honour which you have done to his Royal Highness." (Murmurs, soothed by the arrival of the liquor, during which I paused for a second or two.) "Yes, gentlemen," I resumed,

"it is my painful duty to be obliged to decline. You must all be aware, of course, that the Prince, from his position and natural affability, is perpetually importuned to accept situations similar to that which you have offered him to-night. In such great numbers are they offered to him, indeed, that to fill one tithe of them, even in a nominal and honorary way, would strain and overtax his royal energies most insupportably. Under these circumstances we were obliged to come to a fixed determination; and I assure you that in coming to it I experienced the greatest hesitation and difficulty, but having been come to, it cannot be deviated from. It was this,—that the Prince should only consent to take command of one corps at a time. What that corps should be it was of course left for me to decide; and after renewed hesitation, my choice fell upon—upon—upon the corps which—now enjoys that distinction.

"The Prince himself, with that self-abnegation which characterises him, has frequently implored me to reconsider the matter, and bring him into a wider connection with a movement which he honours and admires.

"Supported by her Majesty, I have, however, remained firm; and you must pardon me if I say that even the impression which you as a corps have made upon me to-night, and the *absorbing* interest which you clearly take in your duties, cannot make me waver.

“On Monday night, the night before I left London, I was dining in private with the Prince and the Duke of Cambridge; and his Royal Highness, understanding that I was about to proceed northward on my tour of inspection, again reverted to the subject. ‘Are you still as obstinate as ever, Hercules?’ said his Royal Highness. ‘Please your Royal Highness, I am a rock,’ I replied. ‘As the Russians found at Inkerman,’ remarked the Duke of Cambridge.” (“Three cheers for Sir Hercules!” cried the doctor, which were rather quaveringly given, however.) “‘Won’t you give me a corps in each of the three kingdoms?’ urged the Prince. ‘It can’t be done at any price, your Royal Highness,’ I replied, firmly but respectfully. ‘I like the Scotch,’ continued the Prince. ‘They are a noble race,’ I replied; ‘especially the Highlanders.’ ‘You should have seen them following me up the Alma Heights,’ said the Duke. ‘Give me a Scotch corps, General,’ said the Prince—‘there’s a good fellow.’ ‘It cuts me to the heart to say “No,” sir,’ I replied. ‘But what am I to say to all these fine fellows?’ he inquired, pulling out a bundle of papers which were requisitions from the Kirkintilloch, Kilbogie, Slamannan, Cowcaddens, and other corps. ‘You can show your interest in them by nominating the gentleman you would wish to fill the post instead of your Royal Highness,’ I replied. ‘It is a happy thought,’ said the Prince; ‘but it is impos-

sible for me to go down to Kilbogie and Cowcaddens at present, and I would not nominate a substitute without being sure of him, as, of course, where *I* nominate, the corps can't refuse to elect.' 'Leave it all to Sir Hercules,' said the Duke; 'his judgment in all military matters is simply the best in the country.' 'Your Royal Highness does me infinite honour,' I replied. 'Pooh, pooh! only your due, O'Halloran,' said the Duke. 'Well, O'Halloran, would you mind going to these places for me,' said the Prince, 'to say that I thank the corps with all my heart, and that I leave you to act for me and nominate a substitute?' 'It is my duty and delight to do what your Royal Highness wishes,' I replied. 'But you must be very careful in your selection, General; you must be sure that the man is fit in every way—above all, that he is a district proprietor;—and when you have made your choice you must be firm. Remember that for the moment you are the Prince of Wales; and if any other corps should elect me while you are in the north, pray go to them also, and select a substitute for me. I am ashamed to give you so much trouble.' 'Don't mention it, Prince,' I replied; 'I will carry out your instructions to the letter.'

"Well, gentlemen, I have been to Kirkintilloch, I have been to Kilbogie, to Slamannan, and to Cowcaddens, and in each of these places I have made, I think, satisfactory appointments. In one instance

the corps had set their hearts upon a gentleman I could not appoint ; but I am bound to say, that the moment they became aware of the ground on which I stood, they evinced the patriotic and loyal self-denial which is characteristic of the volunteer, and at once accepted with enthusiasm the gentleman I had selected.

“Now, gentlemen, by your selection of the Prince to-night you have virtually thrown, as you must see, the appointment of your captain into my hands ; for though, as a matter of form, I shall simply propose a gentleman to you, you will, as a matter of course, accept him ; and, standing in this position, I feel the grave responsibility which rests upon me. On the one hand, it is most unpleasant to me to run counter to your inclinations ; but on the other, the duty I owe to the Prince is paramount.

“As far as my own convictions go, however, I have no hesitation in making my selection. In many districts where I might be called upon to act as I am to-night, I should require time for inquiry and consideration ; but here, in Strathkinahan, I find ready to my hand the right man, and that in the person of one of my oldest and dearest friends, a man of great distinction, high character, probity, and Presbyterian principles—a man, in fact, every inch a man and a soldier. I allude to my honourable friend Sir William M’Vittie of Craig-Vittie, Baronet.”

A perfect howl of indignation rose from the party, upon whom this came like a thunderclap. It was necessary to take a high tone at once, so "Volunteers!" I cried, raising my voice sternly, "you forget in whose presence you virtually are. Situated as you are, this unseemly demonstration is very nearly approaching to a seditious cry, and I trust" (with grim emphasis) "that I shall never have to report or to punish sedition in Strathkinahan. I propose to you Sir William M'Vittie. I am sorry there is a prejudice against him, but I can't help it. How groundless it is I well know.

"His views upon certain practical matters, such as the dipping of sheep, may not be as healthy as I could wish, but a residence in Strathkinahan will correct them. As to his being a temperance man, *that* I repudiate, on behalf of my old friend, as a personal insult; and when I tell you that at Court, where he is known well, his singular power of consuming claret and other fluids has procured for him the nickname of "Gallon" M'Vittie, you will, I think, acquit him of any such baseness." ("Hurrah! hurrah!" from the doctor and Tom, slightly joined in by a few converts.)

"I beg to propose him, then, as a fit and proper person to be Captain of the Strathkinahan Volunteers, and I *expect* the proposal to be seconded and carried unanimously."

"I second it, Sir Hercules!" cried the doctor, at once.

"And it is carried *nem. con.*," I added, hastily. "Get paper, pen, and ink, and I will draw the requisition."

"I make so bold as to make a protest against it," said the diplomatist.

It was necessary to nip this sort of thing in the bud by a *coup d'état*, so I replied with fierce energy, advancing and gobbling at the fellow, "Hold your tongue, sir! you ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir! All your brother volunteers blush for you, sir! Another word, and I shall turn you out of the corps, and out of the room, and send you to the lock-up, sir!"

This quelled the fellow; and the rest of them accepted me as apparently a sort of dictator, endowed with the fullest legislative and executive powers. No farther difficulty was made; and after I had ordered another round of liquor to the health of the Queen, another to the health of Sir William, and a third in honour of Tom and myself, certain hieroglyphs were dashingingly appended to the requisition; and the meeting broke up in the highest delight, after singing "Auld Lang Syne," and dancing hand in hand round the prostrate and senseless form of the Collector.

Next morning we departed at daybreak, and posted the requisition at the first village. I confess I had many misgivings as to what the morning feelings of the Volunteers might be, and whether, in my wish to serve Tom, I might not have run him into a

serious scrape. All, however, went well, and in three weeks I had the satisfaction of seeing Sir William gazetted. And now I can assure my readers that the pious fraud has turned out to admiration.

The Strathkinahans are now a flourishing corps, and Sir William and Tom are still prospering in their official connection with the once tottering "Ad. Batt."

For once, then, the efforts of a practical joker have been productive of beneficial results, for my friend Tom has much benefited therefrom, and thereby, in Strathkinahan, the Volunteer institution has been placed on a solid and satisfactory basis; so that though the austere may decline to admit the Horatian "*Dulce est desipere in loco*," perhaps the blending in this case of the "*utile*" with the "*dulce*" may lead them to find extenuating circumstances in the outrageous audacity of my conduct. Tom has no doubt whatever on the subject. Looking over my shoulder as I write, he bawls out—

"*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.*"
"You carried my point for me, old boy, and I'm for ever grateful."

THE PHILOSOPHER'S BABY.

[MAGA. FEBRUARY 1874.]

I HAD been considering for about a year whether I should marry Winifred Hanway, when I heard that she was engaged to the Philosopher. Why did she accept him? It is true that he is both imaginative and critical; but faculties exercised in the formation of psychological hypotheses and the laborious destruction of those of one's neighbour, do not usually rouse the sympathy of a bright and beautiful girl, who is more fit to live than to think about life. He is certainly handsome, but as certainly his clothes are barbarous. His trousers cannot keep their shape for a day, and his hats are never new. If he notices the rain, he opens an umbrella which might have served as an ineffectual protection at the time of the Deluge; if he finds out that it is cold, he assumes a garment which might have been the everyday coat of Methuselah. His manners are as strange as his appearance. He may often be seen walking in the Park at the fashionable hour

with a far-off look in his eyes, and his hat thrust back as if to lessen the external pressure on his active brain ; more rarely you may hear him bursting into enthusiasm in Piccadilly, though Piccadilly is the last place in which a man should allow himself to be enthusiastic. In short, though he is a true friend, he is an uncomfortable acquaintance ; and his volcanic utterances, after long periods of calm contemplation, cause such shocks to one's nerves as would be conveyed to the Sunday citizen by the eruption of Primrose Hill. But if it was odd that the beautiful Winifred Hanway should marry my friend, it was yet more odd that he should marry any one. There were no topics more certain to excite an explosion in the philosopher than the excessive population of the country, and the wholesome solitude of the Thinker. "How," he would fiercely ask, "can a man think effectually on fundamental subjects, who is compelled by the despicable circumstances of his life to exhaust his analytical faculty in considering how to pay his butcher and when to buy his coals? I tell you, sir, it's better to starve with cold and hunger than to debase one's noblest part to a game of skill with a grasping grocer." Again and again I had heard him declaim in this preposterous fashion ; and after all, he was going to the altar like any other victim, and would doubtless take a house upon his back with the docility of a snail.

I could not solve the problem ; I would not give it up. So, full of the determination to drag Diogenes out of his tub, and the secret out of Diogenes, I stepped round the corner to offer my congratulations. My friend was in his study apparently writing, really eating a quill pen. He rose at me with a rush, wrung my hand till it ached, and blushed rather uncomfortably. Congratulations are the curse of the Briton. Whether he is offering them or receiving them, he is generally obliged to take refuge in intermittent hand-shaking, and most of his sentences tail off into grunts and groans. But on this occasion it was evident that the philosopher had something ready to say, and was nervously anxious to say it. Indeed I had hardly said more than "My dear fellow, I don't know when . . . I really am so awfully glad, I . . . it's in every way so, such a satisfactory, you know . . . I really do wish all possible, and all that sort of thing, you know"—when he burst in with a speech so fluently delivered, that I knew I was not his earliest visitor that morning. "Of course it's taken you by surprise," he said, "as I knew it would ; but the truth is, that I have been thinking of it for a long time, and I am sure I am right." Here I tried to get in an expression of wonder at his new notion of duty, but he was bent on being rid of the matter, and hurried on to his reasons. "In the first place," said he, "I am sure that, instead of

increasing my domestic worries, my marriage will transfer them in a body to my wife; and, secondly, when I consider the vast number of fools who are every day born into the world, I am terrified by the picture of what the next generation will be, if the thinkers of this are to be without successors." Having discharged his reasons in this wise, the orator stood blinking at me as if he feared dissent, but I was too astounded by his magnificent audacity to reply. Slowly a look of peace stole back into his face, a pleasant light dawned in his eyes, and the promise of a smile played at the corner of his mouth. His remarkable fluency was gone, and indeed his voice sounded quite choky when he said, "Johnny, you don't know what an angel she is." A light broke in upon me. "Philosopher," I said, "I believe you are going to be married because you fell in love?" "Perhaps you are right," said the philosopher.

After the wedding, the philosopher and his wife went abroad for an indefinite period, and their friends heard but little of them. He wrote to nobody, and she did not write to me. Yet there were occasional rumours. Now they were breathing the keen air of the Engadine, now sinking to the chestnuts and vines of Chiavenna; now he was lashing himself to frenzy over the treasures of Rome; now she was gazing with sweet northern eyes across the

glowing splendour of the Bay of Naples. Then they were in Germany, and about to settle for life in a university town; but anon had fled from it in haste after a long night's dispute, in the course of which my learned friend had wellnigh come to blows with the university's most celebrated professor.

At last I heard that they were again in London, and, full of enthusiasm, darted round the corner to welcome them home. Nobody was with them but Mrs Hanway, Winifred's mother. I would enter unannounced, and surprise the philosopher. I entered unannounced, and was surprised myself. Was this the effect of matrimony or of foreign travel? Each occupant of the room was engaged in an exercise wholly unconnected, as it seemed, with those of the rest. My friend's wife, the lady whom I had almost loved, queen of all grace and comeliness, was appearing and disappearing like a flash behind the day's 'Times,' showing at the moments of disclosure a face flushed with excitement, and lustrous coils of hair tumbled into the wildest disorder, while she accompanied the whole performance with strange and inarticulate sounds. Her mother, the same Mrs Hanway who was so perfect a model of dress and carriage that many of her lady friends were wont to lament among themselves that she gave herself such airs, was seated on the floor dressed for walking but without her bonnet. Yes,

she was certainly drumming on an inverted tea-tray with the wrong end of the poker. And the philosopher? It was perplexing, after three years' separation, to meet him thus. The philosopher was cantering round the room on all-fours, wearing on his head his own waste-paper basket. Briskly he cantered round, ever and anon frisking like a lamb in spring-time, until he reached my feet, which were rooted to the spot with astonishment. He glanced up sideways, rose with a cry to the normal attitude of man, and grasped me by the hand. At the sound of his voice, his wife dropping the paper from her hands raised them quickly to her hair; and his mother-in-law, with as much dignity as the effort would allow, scrambled on to her feet. Then in an instant the cause of their eccentric conduct was made clear. Throned upon the hearthrug, and showing by a gracious smile a few of the newest teeth, sat a fine baby of some fifteen months. In one dimpled fist was tightly clenched the brush, which had so neatly arranged the mother's braids; while the other was engaged in pounding the grandmother's best bonnet into a shapeless mass.

We were all somewhat embarrassed except the baby. The ladies knew that they were untidy, and I that I was an intruder. As for the learned father, he stood now on one leg and now on the other, while he shifted the waste-paper basket from hand to hand, and continued to smile almost as persever-

ingly as his amiable offspring. Yet it was he who at last put an end to our awkward position by expressing a wild desire to have my opinion of the new curtains in his study. Rather sheepishly I said good-bye to the lady of the house, trying to express by my eyes that I would never call again unannounced. I knew that Mrs Hanway had not forgiven me, as I humbly took the two fingers which she offered; and I felt like a brute, as the most important member of the family condescended to leave a damp spot by the edge of my left whisker.

When, however, I had been swept down-stairs by my impulsive friend, and was alone with him in his den, my courage returned, and with it some indignation. I confronted him, and sternly asked why I had not been told that he was a father. "Not been told?" echoed he; "do you mean to say that you did not know about the Baby?" "Not so much as that it was," I replied, gloomily. He was overwhelmed: of course he had supposed that every one knew it from the Queen downwards. Of course fifty people ought to have told me, who of course had told me everything else. At last my curiosity got the better of my indignation, and I cut short his apologies by beginning my questions—"Does the shape of its head content you?" I asked. "The shape of whose what?" cried the philosopher, apparently too surprised for grammar. "Of the

baby's head, of course," I replied, tartly; "I merely wish to know if the child is likely to be as intellectual as you hoped." "Isn't the hair lovely?" he asked, inconsequently. This was too much, and assuming my severest manner I delivered myself in this wise—"I thought, though no doubt I was wrong, that the use of a baby to you would be partly to furnish you with raw material for a philosopher, partly to enable you by constant observation to gain further evidence bearing on such vexed questions as, whether the infant gains its idea of space by feeling about, whether it is conscious of itself, &c." "Well," he said, laughing, "I don't expect much help from my infant in those matters, unless I can get inside her and think her thoughts." "Her thoughts?" cried I, in amazement; "you don't mean to say it's a girl? Good gracious! you are not going to educate a female philosopher?" He looked rather vexed. "Of course it's a girl," he said. "The father of a female philosopher!" I gasped. "Dear me!" said he, somewhat testily; "isn't it enough to be father of a noble woman?"

Now I have often put up with a great deal from my learned friend, and am quite aware that I have been spoken of as "Bozzy" behind my back. But there is a turning-point even for the worm, and nobody will sit for ever at the feet which are constantly kicking him. I had been snubbed more than enough by this illogical parent, and assum-

ing my most sarcastic manner, I inquired, with an appearance of deference—"Is it not rather early to speak of your daughter as a noble woman?"

"Not at all," said the philosopher.

I had kept aloof from the philosopher for some weeks, nursing my wrath, like Achilles I said to myself—cross as a bear, I overheard my landlady say in the passage—when I received a hasty note begging me to come to him at once. I fancied myself summoned to a council of chiefs; so, having donned my shining armour, I left my tent with fitting dignity, and descended with a clang into the plain. Yet I could not but be aware of my landlady's eye piercing me through the crack of the parlour-door purposely left ajar, and of the hasty flapping of loose slippers which told of the startled slavey's flight into the abyss below.

An unusual silence held my friend's house that morning. The door was opened, before I had time to ring, by a melancholy footman, who, walking before me with the elaborate delicacy of an Agag, noiselessly ushered me into the study. It was my lot to be again rooted to the spot with amazement. By the book-case, in a shaded corner of the room, with his head bowed low upon his hands, knelt the philosopher. Here was a long step from the siege of Troy, from the simple wrath of a child-like hero to the most complex embarrassment of

an heir of all the ages. What should I do? The dismal menial had fled to the shades, without a word, without even a glance into the room. If I retreated, I left my friend unaided, and remained ignorant of the cause of his strange conduct. If I advanced, I was again the intruder on a scene not prepared for my inspection. In an agony of hesitation I fell to brushing my hat with my elbow; but not finding the expected relief in the occupation, I was about to desist, when my hat decided what my head could not, by falling with a crack on the floor. The effect was electrical. Without one glance at the intruder, the philosopher made a grab at the nearest book-shelf, dragged out a volume which had not been touched for half a century, and hunted for nothing in its pages with frantic eagerness. He was still at it, when I stood over him and noted without wonder that he held the book upside down; then with the poorest imitation of surprise which I have ever seen, he rose and grasped my hand. "You found me on the track of something," he said; "I was looking it out in—in——"

Here it occurred to him that he did not know the name of the venerable tome which he had so rudely disturbed; and with a heightened colour and a sudden change of manner he turned quickly to me and said, "My child is ill." I felt positively guilty. I had been angry with that baby for making my wise friend foolish, for not being a boy, for

being called "a noble woman." Was it not shameful that a great hulking brute should sneer at a weak thing that could not even answer with a taunt? Were not my clumsy sarcasms enough to crush so delicate a plant? The poor little "noble woman" was in danger, and I could do nothing to help her. There were tears in the eyes which were looking into mine for comfort; but I had nothing ready to say.

"I could not stand being alone," he muttered, after a short silence; "the doctor is with her now, and in a moment I may hear that my little daughter must—in fact may hear the worst."

While he was speaking, I seemed to have fifty consoling remarks to offer; but when he stopped, no one sentence would disengage itself from the rest. What I blurted out at last seems almost ridiculous as I look back on it.

"You must hope for the best," I said; "you know she has youth on her side."

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when I heard a measured step upon the stairs; presently the door was opened by the noiseless footman, and the most famous of London doctors entered the room. My friend leaned heavily on my arm, but looked at the man of science with seeming calm.

"I am happy to say," said the physician, cheerily, "that our little friend is going on as well as possible."

"And she is out of danger?"

"She never was in it."

"Never in danger?" cried I, almost disappointed.

"She has nothing the matter with her," he replied, "but a slight feverish cold. I have seldom seen a finer or more healthy child. Good morning."

I never was more annoyed. Here was a waste of my finest feelings. Here was I stirred to the depth, wellnigh moved to tears, by a baby's feverish cold. Of course I was very glad that it was no worse; but my friend was too absurd, and I would not spare him.

"Won't you resume your studies?" I asked, sarcastically, pointing to the disturbed book, which was lying on the ground at our feet. His humility might have disarmed me: "I am afraid I've been a fool," he said; "but if you had seen her all flushed and breathing hard; and then she is so small and fragile."

"Yes, for a noble woman," I remarked; he received the dart meekly. "Philosopher," said I, suddenly, determined to rouse him at any cost, "when I entered this room, you were engaged in prayer." His colour certainly deepened. "May I ask," I inquired with an appearance of deference, "whether you were addressing yourself to the Personal First Cause, or to the Unknowable—but perhaps you were merely bowing to the rational order of the Universe?"

He made a gesture of impatience, but answered still with studied moderation, "I was alone and in trouble."

"And the efficacy of prayer?" I asked.

"For heaven's sake," cried he, bursting into excitement, "stop your jargon! Nothing shows such ignorance of a subject as having all its cant phrases on the tip of your tongue. Can't I speak to God without expecting to be paid for it?"

This was turning the tables. If he was going to take to questions, I knew I should end by admitting myself a fool. So to avoid a Socratic dialogue I put my hand on my friend's shoulder and said: "You are a good man, philosopher; may you and the 'noble woman' live a thousand years."

"Thank you," he said, simply; "and now you must let me go and sing a paean with the nobler woman, my patient Penelope, my sweet wife."

So he went with long strides over the asphodel meadow, and I betook myself to my tent full of pleasant thoughts.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

[Dedicated to the inquirers in the Norman Tower.]

BY M. O. W. OLIPHANT.

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CHAPTER I.

CASTLE GOWRIE is one of the most famous and interesting in all Scotland. It is a beautiful old house, to start with,—perfect in old feudal grandeur, with its clustered turrets and walls that could withstand an army,—its labyrinths, its hidden stairs, its long mysterious passages—passages that seem in many cases to lead to nothing, but of which no one can be too sure what they lead to. The front, with its fine gateway and flanking towers, is approached now by velvet lawns, and a peaceful, beautiful old avenue, with double rows of trees, like a cathedral; and the woods out of which these grey towers rise, look as soft and rich in foliage, if not so lofty in growth, as the groves of the South. But this softness of aspect is all new to the place,—that is, new within the century or two which count

for but little in the history of a dwelling-place, some part of which, at least, has been standing since the days when the Saxon Athelings brought such share of the arts as belong to them, to solidify and regulate the original Celtic art which reared incised stones upon rude burial-places, and twined mystic knots on its crosses, before historic days. Even of this primitive decoration there are relics at Gowrie, where the twistings and twinings of Runic cords appear still on some bits of ancient wall, solid as rocks, and almost as everlasting. From these to the graceful French turrets, which recall many a grey chateau, what a long interval of years ! But these are filled with stirring chronicles enough, besides the dim, not always decipherable records, which different developments of architecture have left on the old house. The Earls of Gowrie had been in the heat of every commotion that took place on or about the Highland line for more generations than any but a Celtic pen could record. Rebellions, revenges, insurrections, conspiracies, nothing in which blood was shed and lands lost, took place in Scotland, in which they had not had a share ; and the annals of the house are very full, and not without many a stain. They had been a bold and vigorous race—with much evil in them, and some good ; never insignificant, whatever else they might be. It could not be said, however, that they are remarkable nowadays. Since the first

Stuart rising, known in Scotland as "the Fifteen," they have not done much that has been worth recording; but yet their family history has always been of an unusual kind. The Randolphs could not be called eccentric in themselves: on the contrary, when you knew them, they were at bottom a respectable race, full of all the country-gentleman virtues; and yet their public career, such as it was, had been marked by the strangest leaps and jerks of vicissitude. You would have said an impulsive, fanciful family—now making a grasp at some visionary advantage, now rushing into some wild speculation, now making a sudden sally into public life—but soon falling back into mediocrity, not able apparently, even when the impulse was purely selfish and mercenary, to keep it up. But this would not have been at all a true conception of the family character; their actual virtues were not of the imaginative order, and their freaks were a mystery to their friends. Nevertheless these freaks were what the general world was most aware of in the Randolph race. The late Earl had been a representative peer of Scotland (they had no English title), and had made quite a wonderful start, and for a year or two had seemed about to attain a very eminent place in Scotch affairs; but his ambition was found to have made use of some very equivocal modes of gaining influence, and he dropped accordingly at once and for ever from the political firm-

ment. This was quite a common circumstance in the family. An apparently brilliant beginning, a discovery of evil means adopted for ambitious ends, a sudden subsidence, and the curious conclusion at the end of everything that this schemer, this unscrupulous speculator or politician, was a dull, good man after all — unambitious, contented, full of domestic kindness and benevolence. This family peculiarity made the history of the Randolphs a very strange one, broken by the oddest interruptions, and with no consistency in it. There was another circumstance, however, which attracted still more the wonder and observation of the public. For one who can appreciate such a recondite matter as family character, there are hundreds who are interested in a family secret, and this the house of Randolph possessed in perfection. It was a mystery which piqued the imagination and excited the interest of the entire country. The story went, that somewhere hid amid the massive walls and tortuous passages there was a secret chamber in Gowrie Castle. Everybody knew of its existence; but save the Earl, his heir, and one other person, not of the family, but filling a confidential post in their service, no mortal knew where this mysterious hiding-place was. There had been countless guesses made at it, and expedients of all kinds invented to find it out. Every visitor who ever entered the old gateway, nay, even passing travellers who saw

the turrets from the road, searched keenly for some trace of this mysterious chamber. But all guesses and researches were equally in vain.

I was about to say that no ghost-story I ever heard of has been so steadily and long believed. But this would be a mistake, for nobody knew even with any certainty that there was a ghost connected with it. A secret chamber was nothing wonderful in so old a house. No doubt they exist in many such old houses, and are always curious and interesting—strange relics, more moving than any history, of the time when a man was not safe in his own house, and when it might be necessary to secure a refuge beyond the reach of spies or traitors at a moment's notice. Such a refuge was a necessity of life to a great medieval noble. The peculiarity about this secret chamber, however, was, that some secret connected with the very existence of the family was always understood to be involved in it. It was not only the secret hiding-place for an emergency, a kind of historical possession presupposing the importance of his race, of which a man might be honestly proud; but there was something hidden in it of which assuredly the race could not be proud. It is wonderful how easily a family learns to pique itself upon any distinctive possession. A ghost is a sign of importance not to be despised; a haunted room is worth as much as the richest farm to the complacency of the family that

owns it. And no doubt the younger branches of the Gowrie family—the light-minded portion of the race—felt this, and were proud of their unfathomable secret, and felt a thrill of agreeable awe and piquant suggestion go through them, when they remembered the mysterious something which they did not know in their familiar home. That thrill ran through the entire circle of visitors, and children, and servants, when the Earl peremptorily forbade a projected improvement, or stopped a reckless exploration. They looked at each other with a pleasurable shiver. “Did you hear?” they said. “He will not let Lady Gowrie have that closet she wants so much in that bit of wall. He sent the workmen about their business before they could touch it, though the wall is twenty feet thick if it is an inch; ah!” said the visitors, looking at each other; and this lively suggestion sent tinglings of excitement to their very finger-points; but even to his wife, mourning the commodious closet she had intended, the Earl made no explanations. For anything she knew, it might be there, next to her room, this mysterious lurking-place; and it may be supposed that this suggestion conveyed to Lady Gowrie’s veins a thrill more keen and strange, perhaps too vivid to be pleasant. But she was not in the favoured or unfortunate number of those to whom the truth could be revealed.

I need not say what the different theories on the

subject were. Some thought there had been a treacherous massacre there, and that the secret chamber was blocked by the skeletons of murdered guests,—a treachery no doubt covering the family with shame in its day, but so condoned by long softening of years as to have all the shame taken out of it. The Randolphs could not have felt their character affected by any such interesting historical record. They were not so morbidly sensitive. Some said, on the other hand, that Earl Robert, the wicked Earl, was shut up there in everlasting penance, playing cards with the devil for his soul. But it would have been too great a feather in the family cap to have thus got the devil, or even one of his angels, bottled up, as it were, and safely in hand, to make it possible that any lasting stigma could be connected with such a fact as this. What a thing it would be to know where to lay one's hand upon the Prince of Darkness, and prove him once for all, cloven foot and everything else, to the confusion of gainsayers !

So this was not to be received as a satisfactory solution, nor could any other be suggested which was more to the purpose. The popular mind gave it up, and yet never gave it up; and still everybody who visits Gowrie, be it as a guest, be it as a tourist, be it only as a gazer from a passing carriage, or from the flying railway train which just glimpses its turrets in the distance, daily and

yearly spends a certain amount of curiosity, wonderment, and conjecture about the Secret Chamber—the most piquant and undiscoverable wonder which has endured unguessed and undeciphered to modern times.

This was how the matter stood when young John Randolph, Lord Lindores, came of age. He was a young man of great character and energy, not like the usual Randolph strain—for, as we have said, the type of character common in this romantically-situated family, notwithstanding the erratic incidents common to them, was that of dulness and honesty, especially in their early days. But young Lindores was not so. He was honest and honourable, but not dull. He had gone through almost a remarkable course at school and at the university—not perhaps in quite the ordinary way of scholarship, but enough to attract men's eyes to him. He had made more than one great speech at the Union. He was full of ambition, and force, and life, intending all sorts of great things, and meaning to make his position a stepping-stone to all that was excellent in public life. Not for him the country-gentleman existence which was congenial to his father. The idea of succeeding to the family honours and becoming a mere Scotch peer, either represented or representative, filled him with horror; and filial piety in his case was made warm by all the energy of personal hope, when he prayed that

his father might live, if not for ever, yet longer than any Lord Gowrie had lived for the last century or two. He was as sure of his election for the county the next time there was a chance, as anybody can be certain of anything; and in the meantime he meant to travel, to go to America, to go no one could tell where, seeking for instruction and experience, as is the manner of high-spirited young men with parliamentary tendencies in the present day. In former times he would have gone "to the wars in the Hie Germanie," or on a crusade to the Holy Land; but the days of the crusaders and of the soldiers of fortune being over, Lindores followed the fashion of his time. He had made all his arrangements for his tour, which his father did not oppose. On the contrary, Lord Gowrie encouraged all those plans, though with an air of melancholy indulgence which his son could not understand. "It will do you good," he said, with a sigh. "Yes, yes, my boy; the best thing for you." This, no doubt, was true enough; but there was an implied feeling that the young man would require something to do him good—that he would want the soothing of change and the gratification of his wishes, as one might speak of a convalescent or the victim of some calamity. This tone puzzled Lindores, who, though he thought it a fine thing to travel and acquire information, was as scornful of the idea of being done good to, as is natural

to any fine young fellow fresh from Oxford and the triumphs of the Union. But he reflected that the old school had its own way of treating things, and was satisfied. All was settled accordingly for this journey, before he came home to go through the ceremonial performances of the coming of age, the dinner of the tenantry, the speeches, the congratulations, his father's banquet, his mother's ball. It was in summer, and the country was as gay as all the entertainments that were to be given in his honour. His friend who was going to accompany him on his tour, as he had accompanied him through a considerable portion of his life—Almeric Ffarrington, a young man of the same aspirations—came up to Scotland with him for these festivities. And as they rushed through the night on the Great Northern Railway, in the intervals of two naps, they had a scrap of conversation as to these birthday glories. "It will be a bore, but it will not last long," said Lindores. They were both of the opinion that everything that did not produce information or promote culture was a bore.

"But is there not a revelation to be made to you, among all the other things you have to go through?" said Ffarrington. "Have not you to be introduced to the secret chamber, and all that sort of thing? I should like to be of the party there, Lindores."

"Ah," said the heir, "I had forgotten that part

of it," which, however, was not the case. "Indeed I don't know if I am to be told. Even family dogmas are shaken nowadays."

"Oh, I should insist on that," said Ffarrington, lightly. "It is not many who have the chance of paying such a visit—better than Home and all the mediums. I should insist upon that."

"I have no reason to suppose that it has any connection with Home or the mediums," said Lindores, slightly nettled. He was himself an *esprit fort*; but a mystery in one's own family is not like vulgar mysteries. He liked it to be respected.

"Oh, no offence," said his companion. "I have always thought that a railway train would be a great chance for the spirits. If one were to show suddenly in that vacant seat beside you, what a triumphant proof of their existence that would be! but they don't take advantage of their opportunities."

Lindores could not tell what it was that made him think at that moment of a portrait he had seen in a back room at the castle of old Earl Robert, the wicked Earl. It was a bad portrait—a daub—a copy made by an amateur of the genuine portrait, which, out of horror of Earl Robert and his wicked ways, had been removed by some intermediate lord from its place in the gallery. Lindores had never seen the original—nothing but this daub of a copy. Yet somehow this face occurred to him by some

strange link of association—seemed to come into his eyes as his friend spoke. A slight shiver ran over him. It was strange. He made no reply to Ffarrington, but set himself to think how it could be that the latent presence in his mind of some anticipation of this approaching disclosure, touched into life by his friend's suggestion, should have called out of his memory a momentary realisation of the acknowledged magician of the family. This sentence is full of long words; but unfortunately long words are required in such a case. And the process was very simple when you traced it out. It was the clearest case of unconscious cerebration. He shut his eyes by way of securing privacy while he thought it out; and being tired, and not at all alarmed by his unconscious cerebration, before he opened them again fell fast asleep.

And his birthday, which was the day following his arrival at Glenlyon, was a very busy day. He had not time to think of anything but the immediate occupations of the moment. Public and private greetings, congratulations, offerings, poured upon him. The Gowries were popular in this generation, which was far from being usual in the family. Lady Gowrie was kind and generous, with that kindness which comes from the heart, and which is the only kindness likely to impress the keensighted popular judgment; and Lord Gowrie had but little of the equivocal reputation of his pre-

decessors. They could be splendid now and then on great occasions, though in general they were homely enough; all which the public likes. It was a bore, Lindores said; but yet the young man did not dislike the honours, and the adulation, and all the hearty speeches and good wishes. It is sweet to a young man to feel himself the centre of so many hopes. It seemed very reasonable to him—very natural—that he should be so, and that the farmers should feel a pride of anticipation in thinking of his future speeches in Parliament. He promised to them with the sincerest good faith that he would not disappoint their expectations—that he would feel their interest in him an additional spur. What so natural as that interest and these expectations? He was almost solemnised by his own position—so young, looked up to by so many people—so many hopes depending on him; and yet it was quite natural. His father, however, was still more solemnised than Lindores—and this was strange, to say the least. His face grew graver and graver as the day went on, till it almost seemed as if he were dissatisfied with his son's popularity, or had some painful thought weighing on his mind. He was restless and eager for the termination of the dinner, and to get rid of his guests; and as soon as they were gone, showed an equal anxiety that his son should retire too. "Go to bed at once, as a favour to me," Lord Gowrie said. "You will

have a great deal of fatigue—to-morrow." "You need not be afraid for me, sir," said Lindores, half affronted; but he obeyed, being tired. He had not once thought of the secret to be disclosed to him, through all that long day. But when he woke suddenly with a start in the middle of the night, to find the candles all lighted in his room, and his father standing by his bedside, Lindores instantly thought of it, and in a moment felt that the leading event—the chief incident of all that had happened—was going to take place now.

CHAPTER II.

Lord Gowrie was very grave, and very pale. He was standing with his hand on his son's shoulder to wake him; his dress was unchanged from the moment they had parted. And the sight of this formal costume was very bewildering to the young man as he started up in his bed. But next moment he seemed to know exactly how it was, and, more than that, to have known it all his life. Explanation seemed unnecessary. At any other moment, in any other place, a man would be startled to be suddenly woke up in the middle of the night. But Lindores had no such feeling; he did not even ask a question, but sprang up, and fixed his eyes, taking in all the strange circumstances, on his father's face.

"Get up, my boy," said Lord Gowrie, "and dress as quickly as you can; it is full time. I have lighted your candles, and your things are all ready. You have had a good long sleep."

Even now he did not ask, What is it? as under any other circumstances he would have done. He got up without a word, with an impulse of nervous speed and rapidity of movement such as only excitement can give, and dressed himself, his father helping him silently. It was a curious scene: the room gleaming with lights, the silence, the hurried toilet, the stillness of deep night all around. The house, though so full, and with the echoes of festivity but just over, was quiet as if there was not a creature within it—more quiet, indeed, for the stillness of vacancy is not half so impressive as the stillness of hushed and slumbering life.

Lord Gowrie went to the table when this first step was over, and poured out a glass of wine from a bottle which stood there,—a rich, golden-coloured, perfumy wine, which sent its scent through the room. "You will want all your strength," he said; "take this before you go. It is the famous Imperial Tokay; there is only a little left; and you will want all your strength."

Lindores took the wine; he had never drunk any like it before, and the peculiar fragrance remained in his mind, as perfumes so often do, with a whole world of association in them. His father's eyes

dwelt upon him with a melancholy sympathy. "You are going to encounter the greatest trial of your life," he said; and taking the young man's hand into his, felt his pulse. "It is quick, but it is quite firm, and you have had a good long sleep." Then he did what it needs a great deal of pressure to induce an Englishman to do,—he kissed his son on the cheek. "God bless you!" he said faltering. "Come, now, everything is ready, Lindores."

He took up in his hand a small lamp, which he had apparently brought with him, and led the way. By this time Lindores began to feel himself again, and to wake to the consciousness of all his own superiorities and enlightenments. The simple sense that he was one of the members of a family with a mystery, and that the moment of his personal encounter with this special power of darkness had come, had been the first thrilling, overwhelming thought. But now as he followed his father, Lindores began to remember that he himself was not altogether like other men; that there was that in him which would make it natural that he should throw some light, hitherto unthought of, upon this carefully-preserved darkness. What secret even there might be in it—secret of hereditary tendency, of psychic force, of mental conformation, or of some curious combination of circumstances at once more and less potent than these—it was for him to find out. He gathered all his forces about him, re-

minded himself of modern enlightenment, and bade his nerves be steel to all vulgar horrors. He, too, felt his own pulse as he followed his father. To spend the night perhaps amongst the skeletons of that old-world massacre, and to repent the sins of his ancestors—to be brought within the range of some optical illusion believed in hitherto by all the generations, and which, no doubt, was of a startling kind, or his father would not look so serious,—any of these he felt himself quite strong to encounter. His heart and spirit rose. A young man has but seldom the opportunity of distinguishing himself so early in his career; and his was such a chance as occurs to very few. No doubt it was something that would be extremely trying to the nerves and imagination. He called up all his powers to vanquish both. And along with this call upon himself to exertion, there was the less serious impulse of curiosity: he would see at last what the Secret Chamber was, where it was, how it fitted into the labyrinths of the old house. This he tried to put in its due place as a most interesting object. He said to himself that he would willingly have gone a long journey at any time to be present at such an exploration; and there is no doubt that, in other circumstances, a secret chamber, with probably some unthought-of historical interest in it, would have been a very fascinating

discovery. He tried very hard to excite himself about this ; but it was curious how fictitious he felt the interest, and how conscious he was that it was an effort to feel any curiosity at all on the subject. The fact was, that the Secret Chamber was entirely secondary—thrown back, as all accessories are, by a more pressing interest. The overpowering thought of what was in it drove aside all healthy, natural curiosity about itself.

It must not be supposed, however, that the father and son had a long way to go to have time for all these thoughts. Thoughts travel at lightning speed, and there was abundant leisure for this between the time they had left the door of Lindores' room, and gone down the corridor, no further off than to Lord Gowrie's own chamber, naturally one of the chief rooms of the house. Nearly opposite this, a few steps further on, was a little neglected room devoted to lumber, with which Lindores had been familiar all his life. Why this nest of old rubbish, dust, and cobwebs should be so near the bedroom of the head of the house had been a matter of surprise to many people—to the guests who saw it while exploring, and to each new servant in succession who planned an attack upon its ancient stores, scandalised by finding it to have been neglected by their predecessors. All their attempts to clear it out had, however, been resisted, nobody could tell how, or indeed thought

it worth while to inquire. As for Lindores, he had been used to the place from his childhood, and therefore accepted it as the most natural thing in the world. He had been in and out a hundred times in his play. And it was here, he remembered suddenly, that he had seen the bad picture of Earl Robert which had so curiously come into his eyes on his journey here, by a mental movement which he had identified at once as unconscious cerebration. The first feeling in his mind, as his father went to the open door of this lumber-room, was a mixture of amusement and surprise. What was he going to pick up there? some old pentacle, some amulet or scrap of antiquated magic to act as armour against the evil one? But Lord Gowrie, going on and setting down the lamp on the table, turned round upon his son with a face of agitation and pain which barred all further amusement: he grasped him by the hand, crushing it between his own. "Now my boy, my dear son," he said, in tones that were scarcely audible. His countenance was full of the dreary pain of a looker-on—one who has no share in the excitement of personal danger, but has the more terrible part of watching those who are in deadliest peril. He was a powerful man, and his large form shook with emotion; great beads of moisture stood upon his forehead. An old sword with a cross handle lay upon a dusty chair among other dusty and battered relics. "Take

this with you," he said, in the same inaudible, breathless way—whether as a weapon, whether as a religious symbol, Lindores could not guess. The young man took it mechanically. His father pushed open a door which it seemed to him he had never seen before, and led him into another vaulted chamber. Here even the limited powers of speech Lord Gowrie had retained seemed to forsake him, and his voice became a mere hoarse murmur in his throat. For want of speech he pointed to another door in the further corner of this small vacant room, gave him to understand by a gesture that he was to knock there, and then went back into the lumber-room. The door into this was left open, and a faint glimmer of the lamp shed light into this little intermediate place—this debatable land between the seen and the unseen. In spite of himself, Lindores' heart began to beat. He made a breathless pause, feeling his head go round. He held the old sword in his hand, not knowing what it was. Then, summoning all his courage, he went forward and knocked at the closed door. His knock was not loud, but it seemed to echo all over the silent house. Would everybody hear and wake, and rush to see what had happened? This caprice of imagination seized upon him, ousting all the firmer thoughts, the steadfast calm of mind with which he ought to have encountered the mystery. Would they all rush in, in wild *déshabillé*, in terror and

dismay, before the door opened? How long it was of opening! He touched the panel with his hand again.—This time there was no delay. In a moment, as if thrown suddenly open by some one within, the door moved. It opened just wide enough to let him enter, stopping half-way as if some one invisible held it, wide enough for welcome, but no more. Lindores stepped across the threshold with a beating heart. What was he about to see? the skeletons of the murdered victims? a ghostly charnel-house full of bloody traces of crime? He seemed to be hurried and pushed in as he made that step. What was this world of mystery into which he was plunged—what was it he saw?

He saw—nothing—except what was agreeable enough to behold,—an antiquated room hung with tapestry, very old tapestry of rude design, its colours faded into softness and harmony; between its folds here and there a panel of carved wood, rude too in design, with traces of half-worn gilding; a table covered with strange instruments, parchments, chemical tubes, and curious machinery, all with a quaintness of form and dimness of material that spoke of age. A heavy old velvet cover, thick with embroidery faded almost out of all colour, was on the table; on the wall above it, something that looked like a very old Venetian mirror, the glass so dim and crusted that it scarcely reflected at all; on the floor an old soft Persian carpet, worn into a

vague blending of all colours. This was all that he thought he saw. His heart, which had been thumping so loud as almost to choke him, stopped that tremendous upward and downward motion like a steam piston; and he grew calm. Perfectly still, dim, unoccupied: yet not so dim either; there was no apparent source of light, no windows, curtains of tapestry drawn everywhere—no lamp visible, no fire—and yet a kind of strange light which made everything quite clear. He looked round, trying to smile at his terrors, trying to say to himself that it was the most curious place he had ever seen—that he must show Ffarrington some of that tapestry—that he must really bring away a panel of that carving,—when he suddenly saw that the door was shut by which he had entered—nay, more than shut, undiscernible, covered like all the rest of the walls by that strange tapestry. At this his heart began to beat again in spite of him. He looked round once more, and woke up to more vivid being with a sudden start. Had his eyes been incapable of vision on his first entrance? Unoccupied? Who was that in the great chair?

It seemed to Lindores that he had seen neither the chair nor the man when he came in. There they were, however, solid and unmistakable; the chair carved like the panels, the man seated in front of the table. He looked at Lindores with a calm and open gaze, inspecting him. The young

man's heart seemed in his throat fluttering like a bird, but he was brave, and his mind made one final effort to break this spell. He tried to speak, labouring with a voice that would not sound, and with lips too parched to form a word. "I see how it is," was what he wanted to say. It was Earl Robert's face that was looking at him; and startled as he was, he dragged forth his philosophy to support him. What could it be but optical delusion, unconscious cerebration, occult seizure by the impressed and struggling mind of this one countenance? But he could not hear himself speak any word as he stood convulsed, struggling with dry lips and choking voice.

The Appearance smiled, as if knowing his thoughts—not unkindly, not malignly—with a certain amusement mingled with scorn. Then he spoke, and the sound seemed to breathe through the room not like any voice that Lindores had ever heard, a kind of utterance of the place, like the rustle of the air or the ripple of the sea. "You will learn better to-night: this is no phantom of your brain; it is I."

"In God's name," cried the young man in his soul; he did not know whether the words ever got into the air or not, if there was any air;—"in God's name, who are you?"

The figure rose as if coming to him to reply; and Lindores, overcome by the apparent approach,

struggled into utterance. A cry came from him—he heard it this time—and even in his extremity felt a pang the more to hear the terror in his own voice. But he did not flinch, he stood desperate, all his strength concentrated in the act; he neither turned nor recoiled. Vaguely gleaming through his mind came the thought that to be thus brought in contact with the unseen was the experiment to be most desired on earth, the final settlement of a hundred questions; but his faculties were not sufficiently under command to entertain it. He only stood firm, that was all.

And the figure did not approach him; after a moment it subsided back again into the chair—subsided, for no sound, not the faintest, accompanied its movements. It was the form of a man of middle age, the hair white, but the beard only crisped with grey, the features those of the picture—a familiar face, more or less like all the Randolphins, but with an air of domination and power altogether unlike that of the race. He was dressed in a long robe of dark colour, embroidered with strange lines and angles. There was nothing repellent or terrible in his air—nothing except the noiselessness, the calm, the absolute stillness, which was as much in the place as in him, to keep up the involuntary trembling of the beholder. His expression was full of dignity and thoughtfulness, and not malignant or unkind. He might have

been the kindly patriarch of the house, watching over its fortunes in a seclusion he had chosen. The pulses that had been beating in Lindores were stilled. What was his panic for? a gleam even of self-ridicule took possession of him, to be standing there like an absurd hero of antiquated romance with the rusty, dusty sword—good for nothing, surely not adapted for use against this noble old magician—in his hand—

"You are right," said the voice, once more answering his thoughts; "what could you do with that sword against me, young Lindores? Put it by. Why should my children meet me like an enemy? You are my flesh and blood. Give me your hand."

A shiver ran through the young man's frame. The hand that was held out to him was large and shapely and white, with a straight line across the palm—a family token upon which the Randolphs prided themselves—a friendly hand; and the face smiled upon him, fixing him with those calm, profound, blue eyes. "Come," said the voice. The word seemed to fill the place, melting upon him from every corner, whispering round him with softest persuasion. He was lulled and calmed in spite of himself. Spirit or no spirit, why should not he accept this proffered courtesy? What harm could come of it? The chief thing that retained him was the dragging of the old sword, heavy and

useless, which he held mechanically, but which some internal feeling—he could not tell what—prevented him from putting down. Superstition, was it?

“Yes, that is superstition,” said his ancestor, serenely; “put it down and come.”

“You know my thoughts,” said Lindores; “I did not speak.”

“Your mind spoke, and spoke justly. Put down that emblem of brute force and superstition together. Here it is the intelligence that is supreme. Come.”

Lindores stood doubtful. He was calm; the power of thought was restored to him. If this benevolent venerable patriarch was all he seemed, why his father's terror? why the secrecy in which his being was involved? His own mind, though calm, did not seem to act in the usual way. Thoughts seemed to be driven across it as by a wind. One of these occurred to him suddenly now—

“There came and looked him in the face,
An angel beautiful and bright,
And that he knew it was a fiend.”

The words were not ended, when Earl Robert replied suddenly with impatience in his voice, “Fiends are of the fancy of men; like angels and other follies. I am your father. You know me; and you are mine, Lindores. I have power beyond

what you can understand; but I want flesh and blood to reign and to enjoy. Come, Lindores!"

He put out his other hand. The action, the look, were those of kindness, almost of longing, and the face was familiar, the voice was that of the race. Supernatural! was it supernatural that this man should live here shut up for ages? and why? and how? Was there any explanation of it? The young man's brain began to reel. He could not tell which was real—the life he had left half an hour ago, or this. He tried to look round him, but could not; his eyes were caught by those other kindred eyes, which seemed to dilate and deepen as he looked at them, and drew him with a strange compulsion. He felt himself yielding, swaying towards the strange being who thus invited him. What might happen if he yielded? And he could not turn away, he could not tear himself from the fascination of those eyes. With a sudden strange impulse which was half despair and half a bewildering half-conscious desire to try one potency against another, he thrust forward the cross of the old sword between him and those appealing hands. "In the name of God!" he said.

Lindores never could tell whether it was that he himself grew faint, and that the dimness of swooning came into his eyes after this violence and strain of emotion, or if it was his spell that worked. But there was an instantaneous change. Everything swam around him for the moment, a giddiness and

blindness seized him, and he saw nothing but the vague outlines of the room, empty as when he entered it. But gradually his consciousness came back, and he found himself standing on the same spot as before, clutching the old sword, and gradually, as through a dream, recognised the same figure emerging out of the mist which—was it solely in his own eyes?—had enveloped everything. But it was no longer in the same attitude. The hands which had been stretched out to him were busy now with some of the strange instruments on the table, moving about, now in the action of writing, now as if managing the keys of a telegraph. Lindores felt that his brain was all atwist and set wrong; but he was still a human being of his century. He thought of the telegraph with a keen thrill of curiosity in the midst of his reviving sensations. What communication was this which was going on before his eyes? The magician worked on. He had his face turned towards his victim, but his hands moved with unceasing activity. And Lindores, as he grew accustomed to the position, began to weary—to feel like a neglected suitor waiting for an audience. To be wound up to such a strain of feeling, then left to wait, was intolerable; impatience seized upon him. What circumstances can exist, however horrible, in which a human being will not feel impatience? He made a great many efforts to speak before he could

succeed. It seemed to him that his body felt more fear than he did—that his muscles were contracted, his throat parched, his tongue refusing its office, although his mind was unaffected and undismayed. At last he found an utterance in spite of all resistance of his flesh and blood.

"Who are you?" he said hoarsely. "You that live here and oppress this house?"

The vision raised its eyes full upon him, with again that strange shadow of a smile, mocking yet not unkind. "Do you remember me," he said, "on your journey here?"

"That was—a delusion." The young man gasped for breath.

"More like that you are a delusion. You have lasted but one-and-twenty years, and I—for centuries."

"How? For centuries—and why? Answer me—are you man or demon?" cried Lindores, tearing the words, as he felt, out of his own throat. "Are you living or dead?"

The magician looked at him with the same intense gaze as before. "Be on my side and you shall know everything, Lindores. I want one of my own race. Others I could have in plenty; but I want *you*. A Randolph, a Randolph! and *you*. Dead! do I seem dead? You shall have everything—more than dreams can give—if you will be on my side."

Can he give what he has not? was the thought that ran through the mind of Lindores. But he could not speak it. Something that choked and stifled him was in his throat.

"Can I give what I have not? I have everything—power, the one thing worth having; and you shall have more than power, for you are young—my son! Lindores!"

To argue was natural, and gave the young man strength. "Is this life," he said, "here? What is all your power worth—here? To sit for ages, and make a race unhappy?"

A momentary convulsion came across the still face. "You scorn me," he cried, with an appearance of emotion, "because you do not understand how I move the world. Power! 'Tis more than fancy can grasp. And you shall have it!" said the wizard, with what looked like a show of enthusiasm. He seemed to come nearer, to grow larger. He put forth his hand again, this time so close that it seemed impossible to escape. And a crowd of wishes seemed to rush upon the mind of Lindores. What harm to try if this might be true? To try what it meant—perhaps nothing, delusions, vain show, and then there could be no harm; or perhaps there was knowledge to be had, which was power. Try, try, try! the air buzzed about him. The room seemed full of voices urging him. His bodily frame rose into a tremendous whirl of excitement, his veins

seemed to swell to bursting, his lips seemed to force a yes, in spite of him, quivering as they came apart. The hiss of the s seemed in his ears. He changed it into the name which was a spell too, and cried "Help me, God!" not knowing why.

Then there came another pause—he felt as if he had been dropped from something that held him, and had fallen, and was faint. The excitement had been more than he could bear. Once more everything swam around him, and he did not know where he was. Had he escaped altogether? was the first waking wonder of consciousness in his mind. But when he could think and see again, he was still in the same spot, surrounded by the old curtains and the carved panels—but alone. He felt, too, that he was able to move, but the strangest dual consciousness was in him throughout all the rest of his trial. His body felt to him as a frightened horse feels to a traveller at night—a thing separate from him, more frightened than he was—starting aside at every step, seeing more than its master. His limbs shook with fear and weakness, almost refusing to obey the action of his will, trembling under him with jerks aside when he compelled himself to move. The hair stood upright on his head—every finger trembled as with palsy—his lips, his eyelids, quivered with nervous agitation. But his mind was strong, stimulated to a desperate

calm. He dragged himself round the room, he crossed the very spot where the magician had been—all was vacant, silent, clear. Had he vanquished the enemy? This thought came into his mind with an involuntary triumph. The old strain of feeling came back. Such effects might be produced, perhaps, only by imagination, by excitement, by delusion——

Lindores looked up, a sudden attraction drawing his eyes to one spot, he could not tell why: and the blood suddenly froze in his veins that had been so boiling and fermenting. Some one was looking at him from the old mirror on the wall. A face not human and life-like, like that of the inhabitant of this place, but ghostly and terrible, like one of the dead; and while he looked, a crowd of other faces came behind, all looking at him, some mournfully, some with a menace in their terrible eyes. The mirror did not change, but within its small dim space seemed to contain an innumerable company, crowded above and below, all with one gaze at him. His lips dropped apart with a gasp of horror. More and more and more! He was standing close by the table when this crowd came. Then all at once there was laid upon him a cold hand. He turned; close to his side, brushing him with his robe, holding him fast by the arm, sat Earl Robert in his great chair. A shriek came from the young man's lips. He seemed to hear it echoing away into

unfathomable distance. The cold touch penetrated to his very soul.

"Do you try spells upon me, Lindores? That is a tool of the past. You shall have something better to work with. And are you so sure of whom you call upon? If there is such a one, why should He help you who never called on Him before?"

Lindores could not tell if these words were spoken; it was a communication rapid as the thoughts in the mind. And he felt as if something answered that was not all himself. He seemed to stand passive and hear the argument. "Does God reckon with a man in trouble whether he has ever called to Him before? I call now" (now he felt it was himself that spoke): "go, evil spirit!—go, dead and cursed!—go, in the name of God!"

He felt himself flung violently against the wall. A faint laugh, stifled in the throat, and followed by a groan, rolled round the room; the old curtains seemed to open here and there, and flutter, as if with comings and goings. Lindores leaned with his back against the wall, and all his senses restored to him. He felt blood trickle down his neck; and in this contact once more with the physical, his body, in its madness of fright, grew manageable. For the first time he felt wholly master of himself. Though the magician was standing in his place, a great, majestic, appalling figure, he did not shrink. "Liar!" he cried, in a voice that rang and echoed

as in natural air—"clinging to miserable life like a worm—like a reptile; promising all things, having nothing, but this den, unvisited by the light of day. Is this your power—your superiority to men who die? is it for this that you oppress a race, and make a house unhappy? I vow, in God's name, your reign is over! You and your secret shall last no more."

There was no reply. But Lindores felt his terrible ancestor's eyes getting once more that mesmeric mastery over him which had already almost overcome his powers. He must withdraw his own, or perish. He had a human horror of turning his back upon that watchful adversary: to face him seemed the only safety; but to face him was to be conquered. Slowly, with a pang indescribable, he tore himself from that gaze: it seemed to drag his eyes out of their sockets, his heart out of his bosom. Resolutely, with the daring of desperation, he turned round to the spot where he entered—the spot where no door was,—hearing already in anticipation the step after him—feeling the grip that would crush and smother his exhausted life—but too desperate to care.

CHAPTER III.

How wonderful is the blue dawning of the new day before the sun! not rosy-fingered, like that Aurora of the Greeks who comes later with all her wealth; but still, dreamy, wonderful, stealing out of the unseen, abashed by the solemnity of the new birth. When anxious watchers see that first brightness come stealing upon the waiting skies, what mingled relief and renewal of misery are in it! another long day to toil through—yet another sad night over! Lord Gowrie sat among the dust and cobwebs, his lamp flaring idly into the blue morning. He had heard his son's human voice, though nothing more; and he expected to have him brought out by invisible hands, as had happened to himself, and left lying in long deathly swoon outside that mystic door. This was how it had happened to heir after heir, as told from father to son, one after another, as the secret came down. One or two bearers of the name of Lindores had never recovered; most of them had been saddened and subdued for life. He remembered sadly the freshness of existence which had never come back to himself; the hopes that had never blossomed again; the assurance with which never more he had been able to go about the world. And now his son would be as himself—the glory gone out of

his living—his ambitions, his aspirations wrecked. He had not been endowed as his boy was—he had been a plain, honest man, and nothing more; but experience and life had given him wisdom enough to smile by times at the coquetries of mind in which Lindores indulged. Were they all over now, those freaks of young intelligence, those enthusiasms of the soul? The curse of the house had come upon him—the magnetism of that strange presence, ever living, ever watchful, present in all the family history. His heart was sore for his son; and yet along with this there was a certain consolation to him in having henceforward a partner in the secret—some one to whom he could talk of it as he had not been able to talk since his own father died. Almost all the mental struggles which Gowrie had known had been connected with this mystery; and he had been obliged to hide them in his bosom—to conceal them even when they rent him in two. Now he had a partner in his trouble. This was what he was thinking as he sat through the night. How slowly the moments passed! He was not aware of the daylight coming in. After a while even thought got suspended in listening. Was not the time nearly over? He rose and began to pace about the encumbered space, which was but a step or two in extent. There was an old cupboard in the wall, in which there were restoratives—pungent essences and cordials, and fresh water which he had

himself brought—everything was ready; presently the ghastly body of his boy, half dead, would be thrust forth into his care.

But this was not how it happened. While he waited, so intent that his whole frame seemed to be capable of hearing, he heard the closing of the door, boldly shut with a sound that rose in muffled echoes through the house, and Lindores himself appeared, ghastly indeed as a dead man, but walking upright and firmly, the lines of his face drawn, and his eyes staring. Lord Gowrie uttered a cry. He was more alarmed by this unexpected return than by the helpless prostration of the swoon which he had expected. He recoiled from his son as if he too had been a spirit. "Lindores!" he cried; was it Lindores, or some one else in his place? The boy seemed as if he did not see him. He went straight forward to where the water stood on the dusty table, and took a great draught, then turned to the door. "Lindores!" said his father, in miserable anxiety; "don't you know me?" Even then the young man only half looked at him, and put out a hand almost as cold as the hand that had clutched himself in the Secret Chamber; a faint smile came upon his face. "Don't stay here," he whispered; "come! come!"

Lord Gowrie drew his son's arm within his own, and felt the thrill through and through him of nerves strained beyond mortal strength. He could

scarcely keep up with him as he stalked along the corridor to his room, stumbling as if he could not see, yet swift as an arrow. When they reached his room Lindores turned and closed and locked the door, then laughed as he staggered to the bed. "That will not keep him out, will it?" he said.

"Lindores," said his father, "I expected to find you unconscious. I am almost more frightened to find you like this. I need not ask if you have seen him——"

"Oh, I have seen him. The old liar! Father, promise to expose him, to turn him out—promise to clear out that accursed old nest! It is our own fault. Why have we left such a place shut out from the eye of day? Isn't there something in the Bible about those who do evil hating the light?"

"Lindores! you don't often quote the Bible."

"No, I suppose not; but there is more truth in—many things than we thought."

"Lie down," said the anxious father. "Take some of this wine—try to sleep."

"Take it away; give me no more of that devil's drink. Talk to me—that's better. Did you go through it all the same, poor papa?—and hold me fast. You are warm—you are honest!" he cried. He put forth his hands over his father's, warming them with the contact. He put his cheek like a child against his father's arm. He gave a faint

laugh, with the tears in his eyes. "Warm and honest," he repeated. "Kind flesh and blood! and did you go through it all the same?"

"My boy!" cried the father, feeling his heart glow and swell over the son who had been parted from him for years by that development of young manhood and ripening intellect which so often severs and loosens the ties of home. Lord Gowrie had felt that Lindores half despised his simple mind and duller imagination; but this childlike clinging overcame him, and tears stood in his eyes. "I fainted, I suppose. I never knew how it ended. They made what they liked of me. But you, my brave boy, you came out of your own will."

Lindores shivered. "I fled!" he said. "No honour in that. I had not courage to face him longer. I will tell you by-and-by. But I want to know about you."

What an ease it was to the father to speak! For years and years this had been shut up in his breast. It had made him lonely in the midst of his friends.

"Thank God," he said, "that I can speak to you, Lindores. Often and often I have been tempted to tell your mother. But why should I make her miserable? She knows there is something; she knows when I see him, but she knows no more."

"When you see him?" Lindores raised himself, with a return of his first ghastly look, in his bed.

Then he raised his clenched fist wildly, and shook it in the air. "Vile devil, coward, deceiver!"

"Oh hush, hush, hush, Lindores! God help us! what troubles you may bring!"

"And God help me, whatever troubles I bring," said the young man. "I defy him, father. An accursed being like that must be less, not more powerful, than we are—with God to back us. Only stand by me: stand by me——"

"Hush, Lindores! You don't feel it yet; never to get out of hearing of him all your life! He will make you pay for it—if not now, after; when you remember he is there, whatever happens, knowing everything! But I hope it will not be so bad with you as with me, my poor boy. God help you indeed if it is, for you have more imagination and more mind. I am able to forget him sometimes when I am occupied—when I am in the hunting-field, going across country. But you are not a hunting man, my poor boy," said Lord Gowrie, with a curious mixture of a regret, which was less serious than the other. Then he lowered his voice. "Lindores, this is what has happened to me since the moment I gave him my hand."

"I did not give him my hand."

"You did not give him your hand? God bless you, my boy! You stood out?" he cried, with tears again rushing to his eyes; "and they say—they say—but I don't know if there is any truth in

it." Lord Gowrie got up from his son's side, and walked up and down with excited steps. "If there should be truth in it! Many people think the whole thing is a fancy. If there should be truth in it, Lindores!"

"In what, father?"

"They say, if he is once resisted his power is broken—once refused. *You* could stand against him—you! Forgive me, my boy, as I hope God will forgive me, to have thought so little of His best gifts," cried Lord Gowrie, coming back with wet eyes; and stooping, he kissed his son's hand. "I thought you would be all the more shaken, because there was more mind in you than body," he said, humbly. "I thought if I could but have saved you from the trial; and *you* are the conqueror!"

"Am I the conqueror? I think all my bones are broken, father—out of their sockets," said the young man, in a low voice. "I think I shall go to sleep."

"Yes, rest, my boy. It is the best thing for you," said the father, though with a pang of momentary disappointment. Lindores fell back upon the pillow. He was so pale that there were moments when the anxious watcher thought him not sleeping but dead. He put his hand out feebly, and grasped his father's hand. "Warm—honest," he said, with a feeble smile about his lips, and fell asleep.

The daylight was full in the room, breaking through shutters and curtains, and mocking at the lamp that still flared on the table. It seemed an emblem of the disorders, mental and material, of this strange night; and, as such, it affected the plain imagination of Lord Gowrie, who would have fain got up to extinguish it, and whose mind returned again and again, in spite of him, to this symptom of disturbance. By-and-by, when Lindores' grasp relaxed, and he got his hand free, he got up from his son's bedside, and put out the lamp, putting it carefully out of the way. With equal care he put away the wine from the table, and gave the room its ordinary aspect, softly opening a window to let in the fresh air of the morning. The park lay fresh in the early sunshine, still, except for the twittering of the birds, refreshed with dews, and shining in that soft radiance of the morning which is over before mortal cares are stirring. Never, perhaps, had Gowrie looked out upon the beautiful world around his house without a thought of the weird existence which was going on so near to him, which had gone on for centuries, shut up out of sight of the sunshine. The Secret Chamber had been present with him ever since he had first visited it. He had never been able to get free of the spell. He had felt himself watched, surrounded, spied upon, day after day, since he was of the age of Lindores, and that was thirty years ago.

He turned it all over in his mind, as he stood there and his son slept. It had been on his lips to tell all his story to his boy, who had now come to inherit the enlightenment of his race. And it was a disappointment to him to have the flood in his heart forced back again, and silence imposed upon him once more. Would Lindores care to hear it when he woke? would he not rather, as Lord Gowrie remembered to have done himself, thrust the thought as far as he could away from him, and endeavour to forget for the moment—until the time came when he would not be permitted to forget? He had been like that himself, he recollected now. He had not wished to hear his own father's tale. "I remember," he said to himself; "I remember"—turning over everything in his mind. If Lindores might only be willing to hear the story when he woke! But then he himself had not been willing when he was Lindores, and he could understand his son, and would not blame him; but it would be a disappointment. He was thinking this when he heard Lindores' voice calling him. He went back hastily to his boy's bedside. It was strange to see him in his evening dress with his worn face, in the fresh light of the morning, which poured in at every crevice. "Does my mother know?" said Lindores; "what will she think?"

"She knows something; she knows you have some trial to go through. Most likely she will be

praying for us both ; that's the way of women," said Lord Gowrie, with the tremulous tenderness which comes into a man's voice sometimes when he speaks of a good wife. "I'll go and ease her mind, and tell her all is well over——"

"Not yet. Tell me first," said the young man, putting his hand upon his father's arm.

What an ease it was ! "I was not so good to my father," he thought to himself, with sudden penitence for the long-past, long-forgotten fault, which, indeed, he had never realised as a fault before. And then he told his son what had been the story of his life—how he had scarcely ever sat alone without feeling, from some corner of the room, from behind some curtain, those eyes upon him ; and how, in the difficulties of his life, that secret inhabitant of the house had been always present, sitting by him and advising him. "Whenever there has been anything to do : when there has been a question between two ways, all in a moment I have seen him by me : I feel when he is coming. It does not matter where I am—here or anywhere—as soon as ever there is a question of family business ; and always he persuades me to the wrong way, Lindores. Sometimes I yield to him, how can I help it ? He makes everything so clear ; he makes wrong seem right. If I have done unjust things in my day——"

"You have not, father."

"I have: there were these Highland people I turned out. I did not mean to do it, Lindores; but he showed me that it would be better for the family. And my poor sister that married Tweedside and was wretched all her life. It was his doing, that marriage; he said she would be rich—and so she was, poor thing, poor thing! and died of it. And old Macalister's lease—— Lindores, Lindores! when there is any business it makes my heart sick. I know he will come, and advise wrong, and tell me—something I will repent after."

"The thing to do is to decide beforehand, that, good or bad, you will not take his advice."

Lord Gowrie shivered. "I am not strong like you, or clever; I cannot resist. Sometimes I repent in time and don't do it; and then! But for your mother and you children, there is many a day I would not have given a farthing for my life."

"Father," said Lindores, springing from his bed, "two of us together can do many things. Give me your word to clear out this cursed den of darkness this very day."

"Lindores, hush, hush, for the sake of heaven!"

"I will not, for the sake of heaven! Throw it open—let everybody who likes see it—make an end of the secret—pull down everything, curtains, walls. What do you say?—sprinkle holy water? Are you laughing at me?"

"I did not speak," said Earl Gowrie, growing

very pale, and grasping his son's arm with both his hands. "Hush, boy; do you think he does not hear?"

And then there was a low laugh close to them—so close that both shrank; a laugh no louder than a breath.

"Did you laugh—father?"

"No, Lindores." Lord Gowrie had his eyes fixed. He was as pale as the dead. He held his son tight for a moment; then his gaze and his grasp relaxed, and he fell back feebly in a chair.

"You see!" he said; "whatever we do it will be the same; we are under his power."

And then there ensued the blank pause with which baffled men confront a hopeless situation. But at that moment the first faint stirrings of the house—a window being opened, a bar undone, a movement of feet, and subdued voices—became audible in the stillness of the morning. Lord Gowrie roused himself at once. "We must not be found like this," he said; "we must not show how we have spent the night. It is over, thank God! and oh, my boy, forgive me! I am thankful there are two of us to bear it; it makes the burden lighter—though I ask your pardon humbly for saying so. I would have saved you if I could, Lindores."

"I don't wish to have been saved; but *I* will not bear it. I will end it," the young man said, with an oath out of which his emotion took all

profanity. His father said, "Hush, hush." With a look of terror and pain, he left him; and yet there was a thrill of tender pride in his mind. How brave the boy was! even after he had been *there*. Could it be that this would all come to nothing, as every other attempt to resist had done before?

"I suppose you know all about it now, Lindores," said his friend Ffarrington, after breakfast; "luckily for us who are going over the house. What a glorious old place it is!"

"I don't think that Lindores enjoys the glorious old place to-day," said another of the guests under his breath. "How pale he is! He doesn't look as if he had slept."

"I will take you over every nook where I have ever been," said Lindores. He looked at his father with almost command in his eyes. "Come with me, all of you. We shall have no more secrets here."

"Are you mad?" said his father in his ear.

"Never mind," cried the young man. "Oh, trust me; I will do it with judgment. Is everybody ready?" There was an excitement about him that half frightened, half roused the party. They all rose, eager, yet doubtful. His mother came to him and took his arm.

"Lindores! you will do nothing to vex your

father; don't make him unhappy. I don't know your secrets, you two; but look, he has enough to bear."

"I want you to know our secrets, mother. Why should we have secrets from you?"

"Why, indeed?" she said, with tears in her eyes. "But, Lindores, my dearest boy, don't make it worse for *him*."

"I give you my word, I will be wary," he said; and she left him to go to his father, who followed the party, with an anxious look upon his face.

"Are you coming, too?" he asked.

"I? No; I will not go: but trust him—trust the boy, John."

"He can do nothing; he will not be able to do anything," he said.

And thus the guests set out on their round—the son in advance, excited and tremulous, the father anxious and watchful behind. They began in the usual way, with the old state-rooms and picture-gallery; and in a short time the party had half forgotten that there was anything unusual in the inspection. When, however, they were half-way down the gallery, Lindores stopped short with an air of wonder. "You have had it put back then?" he said. He was standing in front of the vacant space where Earl Robert's portrait ought to have been. "What is it?" they all cried, crowding upon him, ready for any marvel. But as there

was nothing to be seen, the strangers smiled among themselves. "Yes, to be sure, there is nothing so suggestive as a vacant place," said a lady who was of the party. "Whose portrait ought to be there, Lord Lindores?"

He looked at his father, who made a slight assenting gesture, then shook his head drearily.

"Who put it there?" Lindores said, in a whisper.

"It is not there; but you and I see it," said Lord Gowrie, with a sigh.

Then the strangers perceived that something had moved the father and the son, and, notwithstanding their eager curiosity, obeyed the dictates of politeness, and dispersed into groups looking at the other pictures. Lindores set his teeth and clenched his hands. Fury was growing upon him—not the awe that filled his father's mind. "We will leave the rest of this to another time," he cried, turning to the others, almost fiercely. "Come, I will show you something more striking now." He made no further pretence of going systematically over the house. He turned and went straight up-stairs, and along the corridor. "Are we going over the bed-rooms?" some one said. Lindores led the way straight to the old lumber-room, a strange place for such a gay party. The ladies drew their dresses about them. There was not room for half of them. Those who could get in began to handle the strange things that lay about, touching

them with dainty fingers, exclaiming how dusty they were. The window was half blocked up by old armour and rusty weapons; but this did not hinder the full summer daylight from penetrating in a flood of light. Lindores went in with fiery determination on his face. He went straight to the wall, as if he would go through, then paused with a blank gaze. "Where is the door?" he said.

"You are forgetting yourself," cried Lord Gowrie, speaking over the heads of the others. "Lindores! you know very well there never was any door there; the wall is very thick; you can see by the depth of the window. There is no door there."

The young man felt it over with his hand. The wall was smooth, and covered with the dust of ages. With a groan he turned away. At this moment a suppressed laugh, low, yet distinct, sounded close by him. "You laughed?" he said, fiercely, to Ffarrington, striking his hand upon his shoulder.

"I—laughed! Nothing was farther from my thoughts," said his friend, who was curiously examining something that lay upon an old carved chair. "Look here! what a wonderful sword, cross-hilted! Is it an Andrea? What's the matter, Lindores?"

Lindores had seized it from his hands; he dashed it against the wall with a suppressed oath. The two or three people in the room stood aghast.

"Lindores!" his father said, in a tone of warning. The young man dropped the useless weapon with a groan. "Then God help us!" he said; "but I will find another way."

"There is a very interesting room close by," said Lord Gowrie, hastily—"this way! Lindores has been put out by—some changes that have been made without his knowledge," he said, calmly. "You must not mind him. He is disappointed. He is perhaps too much accustomed to have his own way."

But Lord Gowrie knew that no one believed him. He took them to the adjoining room, and told them some easy story of an apparition that was supposed to haunt it. "Have you ever seen it?" the guests said, pretending interest. "Not I; but we don't mind ghosts in this house," he answered, with a smile. And then they resumed their round of the old noble mystic house.

I cannot tell the reader what young Lindores has done to carry out his pledged word and redeem his family. It may not be known, perhaps, for another generation, and it will not be for me to write that concluding chapter: but when, in the ripeness of time, it can be narrated, no one will say that the mystery of Gowrie Castle has been a vulgar horror, though there are some who are disposed to think so now.

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